

## KENILWORTH



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# KENILWORTH

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

*WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY*

MICHAEL MACMILLAN, D.LITT.

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*

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## AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION.

A CERTAIN degree of success, real or supposed, in the delineation of Queen Mary, naturally induced the author to attempt something similar respecting "her sister and her foe," the celebrated Elizabeth. He will not, however, pretend to have approached the task with the same feelings ; for the candid Robertson himself confesses having felt the prejudices with which a Scottishman is tempted to regard the subject, and what so liberal a historian avows, a poor romance-writer dares not disown. But he hopes the influence of a prejudice, almost as natural to him as his native air, will not be found to have greatly affected the sketch he has attempted of England's Elizabeth. I have endeavoured to describe her as at once a high-minded sovereign and a female of passionate feelings, hesitating betwixt the sense of her rank and the duty she owed her subjects on the one hand, and on the other her attachment to a nobleman, who, in external qualifications at least, amply merited her favour. The interest of the story is thrown upon that period when the sudden death of the first Countess of Leicester seemed to open to the ambition of her husband the opportunity of sharing the crown of his sovereign.

It is possible that slander, which very seldom favours the memories of persons in exalted stations, may have blackened the character of Leicester with darker shades than really belonged to it. But the almost general voice of the times attached the most foul suspicions to the death of the unfortunate Countess, more especially as it took place so very opportunely for the indulgence of her lover's ambition. If we can trust Ashmole's *Antiquities of Berkshire*, there was but too much ground for the traditions which charge Leicester with the murder of his wife.

In the following extract of the passage, the reader will find the authority I had for the story of the romance :—

“At the west end of the church are the ruins of a manor, anciently belonging (as a cell, or place of removal, as some report) to the monks of Abington. At the Dissolution, the said manor, or lordship, was conveyed to one—Owen (I believe), the possessor of Godstow then.

“In the hall, over the chimney, I find Abington arms cut in stone, viz. a patonce between four malletts; and also another escutcheon, viz. a lion rampant, and several mitres cut in stone about the house. There is also in the said house, a chamber called Dudley’s chamber, where the Earl of Leicester’s wife was murdered; of which this is the story following:

“Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, a very goodly personage, and singularly well featured, being a great favourite to Queen Elizabeth, it was thought, and commonly reported, that had he been a bachelor or widower, the Queen would have made him her husband; to this end, to free himself of all obstacles, he commands, or perhaps, with fair flattering intreaties, desires his wife to repose herself here at his servant Anthony Foster’s house, who then lived in the aforesaid manor-house; and also prescribed to Sir Richard Varney, (a prompter to this design,) at his coming hither, that he should first attempt to poison her, and if that did not take effect, then by any other way whatsoever to dispatch her. This, it seems, was proved by the report of Dr. Walter Bayly, sometime fellow of New College, then living in Oxford, and professor of physic in that university; whom, because he would not consent to take away her life by poison, the Earl endeavoured to displace him the court. This man, it seems, reported for most certain, that there was a practice in Cumnor among the conspirators, to have poisoned this poor innocent lady, a little before she was killed, which was attempted after this manner:—They seeing the good lady sad and heavy (as one that well knew by her other handling, that her death was not far off), began to persuade her that her present disease was abundance of melancholy and other humours, etc., and therefore would needs counsel her to take some potion, which she absolutely refusing to do, as still

suspecting the worst ; whereupon they sent a messenger on a day (unawares to her) for Dr. Bayly, and entreated him to persuade her to take some little potion by his direction, and they would fetch the same at Oxford ; meaning to have added something of their own for her comfort, as the doctor upon just cause and consideration did suspect, seeing their great importunity, and the small need the lady had of physic, and therefore he peremptorily denied their request ; misdoubting (as he afterwards reported), lest, if they had poisoned her under the name of his potion, he might after have been hanged for a colour of their sin, and the doctor remained still well assured, that this way taking no effect, she would not long escape their violence, which afterwards happened thus. For Sir Richard Varney above-said (the chief projector in this design), who, by the Earl's order, remained that day of her death alone with her, with one man only and Foster, who had that day forcibly sent away all her servants from her to Abington market, about three miles distant from this place, they (I say, whether first stifling her, or else strangling her) afterwards flung her down a pair of stairs and broke her neck, using much violence upon her ; but, however, though it was vulgarly reported that she by chance fell down stairs (but still without hurting her hood that was upon her head), yet the inhabitants will tell you there, that she was conveyed from her usual chamber where she lay, to another where the bed's head of the chamber stood close to a privy postern door, where they in the night came and stifled her in her bed, bruised her head very much, broke her neck, and at length flung her down stairs, thereby believing the world would have thought it a mischance, and so have blinded their villany. But behold the mercy and justice of God in revenging and discovering this lady's murder, for one of the persons that was a coadjutor in this murder, was afterwards taken for a felony in the marches of Wales, and offering to publish the manner of the aforesaid murder, was privately made away in the prison by the Earl's appointment ; and Sir Richard Varney the other, dying about the same time in London, cried miserably, and blasphemed God, and said to a person of note (who hath related the same to others since), not

long before his death, that all the devils in hell did tear him in pieces. Foster, likewise, after this fact, being a man formerly addicted to hospitality, company, mirth, and music, was afterwards observed to forsake all this, and with much melancholy and pensiveness (some say with madness), pined and drooped away. The wife also of Bald Butter, kinsman to the Earl, gave out the whole fact a little before her death. Neither are these following passages to be forgotten, that as soon as ever she was murdered, they made great haste to bury her before the coroner had given in his inquest (which the Earl himself condemned as not done advisedly), which her father, or Sir John Robertsett (as I suppose), hearing of, came with all speed hither, caused her corpse to be taken up, the coroner to sit upon her, and further enquiry to be made concerning this business to the full ; but it was generally thought that the Earl stopped his mouth, and made up the business betwixt them ; and the good Earl, to make plain to the world the great love he bare to her while alive, and what a grief the loss of so virtuous a lady was to his tender heart, caused (though the thing, by these and other means, was beaten into the heads of the principal men of the University of Oxford), her body to be re-buried in St. Mary's church in Oxford, with great pomp and solemnity. It is remarkable, when Dr. Babington, the Earl's chaplain, did preach the funeral sermon, he tript once or twice in his speech, by recommending to their memories that virtuous lady so pitifully *murdered*, instead of saying pitifully slain. This Earl, after all his murders and poisonings, was himself poisoned by that which was prepared for others (some say by his wife at Cornbury Lodge before mentioned), though Baker in his Chronicle would have it at Killingworth, anno 1588." <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ashmole's *Antiquities of Berkshire*, vol. 1., p. 149. The tradition as to Leicester's death was thus communicated by Ben Jonson to Drummond of Hawthornden :—"The Earl of Leicester gave a bottle of liquor to his Lady, which he willed her to use in any faintness, which she, after his returne from court, not knowing it was poison, gave him, and so, he died."—BEN JONSON'S *Information to DRUMMOND of Hawthornden*, MS.—SIR ROBERT SIBBALD'S *Copy*

The same accusation has been adopted and circulated by the author of Leicester's Commonwealth, a satire written directly against the Earl of Leicester, which loaded him with the most horrid crimes, and, among the rest, with the murder of his first wife. It was alluded to in the *Yorkshire Tragedy*, a play erroneously ascribed to Shakespeare, where a baker, who determines to destroy all his family, throws his wife down stairs, with this allusion to the supposed murder of Leicester's lady,—

The only way to charm a woman's tongue  
Is, break her neck—a politician did it.

The reader will find I have borrowed several incidents as well as names from Ashmole, and the more early authorities ; but my first acquaintance with the history was through the more pleasing medium of verse. There is a period in youth when the mere power of numbers has a more strong effect on ear and imagination, than in more advanced life. At this season of immature taste the author was greatly delighted with the poems of Mickle and Langhorne, poets who, though by no means deficient in the higher branches of their art, were eminent for their powers of verbal melody above most who have practised this department of poetry. One of those pieces of Mickle, which the author was particularly pleased with, is a ballad, or rather a species of elegy, on the subject of Cumnor Hall, which, with others by the same author, were to be found in Evan's *Ancient Ballads* (volume iv., page 130), to which work Mickle made liberal contributions. The first stanza especially had a peculiar species of enchantment for the youthful ear of the author, the force of which is not even now entirely spent ; some others are sufficiently prosaic.

#### CUMNOR HALL.

The dews of summer night did fall ;  
The moon, sweet regent of the sky,  
Silver'd the walls of Cumnor Hall,  
And many an oak that grew thereby.

Now nought was heard beneath the skies,  
The sounds of busy life were still,

Save an unhappy lady's sighs,  
That issued from that lonely pile.

"Leicester," she cried, "is this thy love  
That thou so oft has sworn to me,  
To leave me in this lonely grove,  
Immured in shameful privacy ?

"No more thou com'st with lover's speed,  
Thy once beloved bride to see,  
But be she alive, or be she dead,  
I fear, stern Earl, 's the same to thee.

"Not so the usage I received  
When happy in my father's hall ;  
No faithless husband then me grieved,  
No chilling fears did me appal.

"I rose up with the cheerful morn,  
No lark more blithe, no flower more gay,  
And like the bird that haunts the thorn,  
So merrily sung the livelong day.

"If that my beauty is but small,  
Among court ladies all despised,  
Why didst thou rend it from that hall,  
Where, scornful Earl, it well was prized ?

"And when you first to me made suit,  
How fair I was you oft would say '  
And proud of conquest, pluck'd the fruit,  
Then left the blossom to decay.

"Yes ' now neglected and despised,  
The rose is pale, the lily's dead,  
But he that once their charms so prized,  
Is sure the cause those charms are fled.

"For know, when sick'ning grief doth prey,  
And tender love's repaid with scorn,  
The sweetest beauty will decay,— "  
What floweret can endure the storm ?



- “ At court, I'm told, is beauty's throne,  
Where every lady's passing rare,  
That Eastern flowers, that shame the sun,  
Are not so glowing, not so fair.
- “ Then, Earl, why didst thou leave the beds  
Where roses and where lilies vie,  
To seek a primrose, whose pale shades  
Must sicken when those gauds are by ?
- “ 'Mong rural beauties I was one,  
Among the fields wild flowers are fair ;  
Some country swain might me have won,  
And thought my beauty passing rare
- “ But, Leicester, (or I much am wrong,)  
Or 'tis not beauty lures thy vows ;  
Rather ambition's gilded crown  
Makes thee forget thy humble spouse.
- “ Then, Leicester, why, again I plead,  
(The injured surely may repine,)—  
Why didst thou wed a country maid,  
When some fair princess might be thine ?
- “ Why didst thou praise my humble charms,  
And, oh ! then leave them to decay ?  
Why didst thou win me to thy aims,  
Then leave to mourn the livelong day ?
- “ The village maidens of the plain  
Salute me lowly as they go ,  
Envious they mark my silken train,  
Nor think a Countess can have woe.
- “ The simple nymphs ! they little know  
How far more happy's their estate ;  
To smile for joy—than sigh for woe—  
To be content—than to be great.
- “ How far less blest am I than them ?  
Daily to pine and waste with care !

Like the poor plant, that, from its stem  
Divided, feels the chilling air.

“Nor, cruel Earl ! can I enjoy  
The humble charms of solitude ;  
Your minions proud my peace destroy,  
By sullen frowns or pratings rude.

“Last night, as sad I chanced to stray,  
The village death-bell smote my ear ;  
They wink’d aside, and seemed to say,  
‘Countess, prepare, thy end is near !’

“And now, while happy peasants sleep,  
Here I sit lonely and forlorn ;  
No one to soothe me as I weep,  
Save Philomel on yonder thorn.

“My spirits flag—my hopes decay—  
Still that dread death-bell smites my ear  
And many a boding seems to say,  
‘Countess, prepare, thy end is near !’”

Thus sore and sad that lady grieved,  
In Cumnor Hall, so lone and drear ;  
And many a heartfelt sigh she heaved,  
And let fall many a bitter tear.

And ere the dawn of day appear’d  
In Cumnor Hall, so lone and drear,  
Full many a piercing scream was heard,  
And many a cry of mortal fear.

The death-bell thrice was heard to ring,  
An aërial voice was heard to call,  
And thrice the raven flapp’d its wing  
Around the towers of Cumnor Hall.

The mastiff howl’d at village door,  
The oaks were shatter’d on the green ;  
Woe was the hour—for never more  
That hapless Countess e’er was seen !

And in that Manor now no more  
Is cheerful feast and sprightly ball ;  
For ever since that dreary hour  
Have spirits haunted Cumnor Hall.

The village maids, with fearful glance,  
Avoid the ancient moss-grown wall ;  
Nor ever lead the merry dance  
Among the groves of Cumnor Hall.

Full many a traveller oft hath sigh'd,  
And pensive wept the Countess' fall,  
As wand'ring onwards they've espied  
The haunted towers of Cumnor Hall.

ABBOTSFORD,  
1st *March*, 1831.

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION.

KENILWORTH, occupying a commanding position in a fertile region in the centre of England, appears to have been an important place even before the Norman Conquest. The castle first takes a distinct place in history in the reign of Henry I., who conferred the manor on the Lord Chamberlain, Geoffrey de Clinton. This Geoffrey de Clinton and his sons built the old keep known as Caesar's Tower, and founded an Augustinian priory and church to the east of the castle. All through its history the castle was closely connected with royalty either as a possession of successive kings or as a favourite resting place in their progresses through the Kingdom. King John took possession of the castle and visited it five times. His son, Henry III., also paid several visits to the castle, of which he made his brother-in-law, Simon de Montfort, governor, in 1244. Consequently Kenilworth played an important part in the Barons' War, as the principal stronghold of the rebellious nobles. After the defeat and death of Simon de Montfort at Evesham in 1265 the castle was resolutely defended for six months by Henry de Hastings. On the conclusion of the Barons' War the King gave Kenilworth to Edmund, Earl of Lancaster, younger brother of Edward I. His son Thomas rebelled against Edward II and took an active part in the execution of Gaveston, for which he was beheaded at Pontefract in 1322. His death was avenged by his brother Henry, who, conspiring with other barons, led Edward II. as a captive to Kenilworth. There the King consented to abdicate in accordance with the wishes of Parliament, as is recorded in Marlowe's drama *Edward II.* Through John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who built the Great Hall, the castle passed once more into royal hands, when his son ascended the throne as

Henry IV., and it remained a possession of the crown down to the reign of Elizabeth. That queen gave the castle in 1563 to her favourite, the Earl of Leicester, with whose name it is more indissolubly associated than with his predecessors, on account of the famous revels held there in 1575 and the popularity of Scott's novel. The Earl of Leicester is said to have spent on the castle £60,000, which would be equivalent to about £300,000 in the beginning of the twentieth century. His chief addition to the buildings was the Gate House erected in 1570, to be the chief entrance to the castle grounds. In the reign of James I. and Charles I. Kenilworth once more became a royal possession. Charles I. spent two days there on his way to the battle of Edge Hill. Towards the end of the Civil War Kenilworth was occupied by the rebel forces and by them the castle was dismantled, which accounts for its state at the present day.

Thus, when Scott, after he had with brilliant success in the *Abbot* portrayed Mary Queen of Scots, resolved to try his hand at the delineation of her great adversary, he could not have found a nobler background for his descriptions of Elizabethan magnificence than Kenilworth Castle. He knew the place well. On his return from his visit to the continent in 1815 Lockhart tells us that he went with Charles Matthews to Warwick and Kenilworth, "both of which castles the poet had seen before, but now re-examined with particular curiosity." Scott probably inspected the ruins also in 1807 and in 1819 when he was Sir George Beaumont's guest at Coleorton near Ashby de la Zouche. In the details of the architecture of the castle he generally followed *Kenilworth Illustrated*, a handsome volume published at Chuswick in 1821. His account of the pageants is derived from a letter written by one Robert Laneham from Kenilworth to a friend in London, in which they are fully described. The suggestion of the period chosen for the novel came from Constable, the bookseller, who, as Lockhart relates, requested "that Queen Elizabeth might be brought into the field in his next romance, as a companion to the Mary Stuart of the *Abbot*." Constable proposed that the novel should be called the *Armada*. Scott, however, preferred another episode in Elizabeth's reign. He

held in affectionate remembrance Mickle's ballad of *Cumnor Hall* (see p. xi), especially the melodious opening stanza, and this he determined should supply the story and the title of his new work. Afterwards, however, he consented, at Constable's suggestion, to call his novel not *Cumnor Hall* but *Kenilworth*.

Scott, like Shakespeare, took great liberties with history. When he mingled it with fiction, he did not hesitate to commit such anachronisms, anachronisms and other transgressions of historical fact, as would give his narrative unity and make it more interesting. Sometimes he treats gossiping anecdotes as actual fact and sometimes relates what is demonstrably impossible. Whether the Earl of Leicester was guilty of the murder of Amy Robsart or whether her death was the result of her accidentally falling down stairs is an open question which will probably never be settled. Dark rumours were prevalent, accusing Leicester of the crime. On the other hand an inquest was held which does not appear to have implicated the Earl, but was in some ways unsatisfactory to him, for, though the jury gave a verdict of accidental death, he demanded the summoning of a second jury, a demand which may naturally be regarded as an indication of his conscience being clear of guilt. Scott follows the account of the matter given in Ashmole's *Antiquities of Berkshire* which is based on *Leicester's Commonwealth*, a partizan pamphlet written against Leicester. This pamphlet naturally took full advantage of rumours prejudicial to Leicester and many inaccuracies have been found in it. What is certain is that Amy was dead in 1560, fifteen years before the revels at Kenilworth. In 1575 Leicester had indeed an unacknowledged wife, who was not, however, Amy Robsart, but Lady Sheffield. This is Scott's main transgression of history. He prolonged Amy's life so that he might introduce the entertainment of Elizabeth at Kenilworth into his story. Also he naturally did not like to omit Shakespeare. Therefore he brings him in as having already written the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the *Tempest*, and *Troilus and Cressida*, in 1575, although the poet was then only eleven years old. There are other violations of historical fact in the novel. Amy's father was Sir John Robsart

of Norfolk and not Sir Hugh Robsart of Lildcote Hall, near Exmoor. She was married in 1550, not secretly, but publicly at Sheen Palace, in the presence of Edward VI. In the conversations in *Kenilworth* Scott was not impaled on the horns of the dilemma that he had to face in *Ivanhoe*, and afterwards in the *Tahsman*. If in those novels he had represented his characters as speaking Middle English, what they said would have been unintelligible to his readers. If, on the other hand, he had allowed them to express themselves in nineteenth century English, he would not only have been untrue to fact but would also have given a painfully modern air to his narrative. His way out of the dilemma was the compromise of giving the conversation in Elizabethan English, which he could do well on account of his familiarity with Shakespeare and the other Elizabethan dramatists. This practice, which was an anachronism in his medieval novels, he followed in *Kenilworth*, where of course, in so far as he correctly reproduces Elizabethan English, it is unimpeachable, and so he gives us the very words which his fictitious personages might have uttered.

*Kenilworth*, published in 1821, was the twelfth in order of the Waverley novels and the second in which, crossing the border, Scott found fresh woods and pastures new for his creative imagination in England. It must be classed as a historical novel based on English history with *Ivanhoe*, *Peveril of the Peak*, and *Woodstock*. The *Fortunes of Nigel* also deals with English history, but the chief interest centres round the Scottish characters, especially round the lifelike portrait of James the Sixth of Scotland and First of England. In all these novels, as in the *Abbot* which immediately preceded *Kenilworth*, Scott shows his remarkable power of depicting kings and queens and other persons of high political importance, in which and in his broad sympathy with all sorts and conditions of men he may be said to rival Shakespeare. In his portrait gallery Elizabeth may hold an honourable place beside Richard Coeur-de-Lion, Louis XI. of France, James I. and Mary Queen of Scots in his other historical novels, even, we may add, with Shakespeare's monarchs. In the novel he brings out by words and actions the character he

attributes to her in the introduction dated 1831, where he directly portrays her. "I have endeavoured" he says, "to describe her as at once a high-minded sovereign and a female of passionate feelings, hesitating betwixt the sense of her rank and the duty she owed her subjects on the one hand, and on the other her attachment to a nobleman, who, in external qualifications at least, amply merited her favour." In her pride of place, the subject of unlimited adulation, she is admirably contrasted with her fair, girlish rival, subjected to cruel indignities and owing to political schemes involved in a mesh from which she can find no escape, as her husband will not listen to the plain course of honour that she recommends to him. In *Kennilworth* as in the *Bride of Lammermoor*, and most of his novels Scott shows clear traces of the influence of Shakespeare. We have seen that he could not forbear from bringing Shakespeare into the story and quoting passages from his plays without regard to chronology. Leicester and Varney correspond to Othello and Iago. In both cases we have a clever inferior inciting a superior of high rank and reputation to murder his guiltless wife. Sometimes we notice resemblance in detail. Both Varney and Iago excite curiosity and enhancement of passionate anger by holding back what the unjust suspicions are founded upon and by pretending to defend their victims. (Compare p 141, l. 16, p. 144, l. 21 with *Othello III. iii.*)

Varney, however, unlike Iago, has some redeeming points in his character. He was once inclined to avoid the "fatal crisis," possibly through fear, but perhaps from pity for his victim (p. 135). He "really loved his patron as well as such a wretch was capable of loving anything" and in his last declaration was careful to spare his character. Perhaps it is on account of these mitigations of his villainy, that Scott, who in all his novels was inclined to be merciful to his villains, would not allow him to be hanged. To the subordinate villain Michael Lambourne many readers will be quite ready to extend their sympathy. He was boastful, unscrupulous, and a drunkard, but he had a code of honour. It was clean against his conscience, he said, to hurt a man with whom he had drunk a morning draught. So he



would not, at Cumnor, attack Tressilian, who had, it must be confessed, addressed him with unjustifiable rudeness as a "base groom." Scott himself knew that he was more successful in portraying blackguards than heroes. He depicted the former with more zest and insight and consequently his reader likes them as a rule very much better than the exemplary but rather colourless young men who are the nominal heroes of his novels. Tressilian's only objectionable trait was his tendency to have too much respect for high birth, a fault from which Scott himself was not quite free. He was a brave soldier, a scholar, honourable and constant in his affection, and everything else that was admirable and "faultily faultless," so that, though he inspires respect, he does not succeed in winning our hearts.

Are historical novels useful as supplements to history proper? The question is much debated. We have seen that in *Kenilworth* historical truth is often sacrificed in order to enhance the interest of the story. But these transgressions of history are, after all, not very important. Our understanding of the great reign of Queen Elizabeth is not very injuriously affected by our being perhaps induced to believe, that at the time of the revels at Kenilworth, Amy Robsart was still living, and that already Shakespeare had composed his dramas, and Raleigh had distinguished himself in Ireland. And probably such delusions are only temporary, as they are easily corrected when we proceed to compare the novel with the facts of history. It is more serious if the novelist misrepresents the character of Queen Elizabeth or her leading statesmen. But we have really no reason to believe that Scott's conception of the great queen and her favourite is less true than that given in any history. For Scott undoubtedly is gifted in a high degree with the historical imagination, so that he sees vividly in his mind's eye the great men and women of the past in their surroundings, especially when he depicts them in scenes with such picturesque and stimulating backgrounds as Kenilworth Castle or the Thames. The permanent impression we carry away from the great historical novel is a vision of the magnificence of Tudor England, which harmonises with the play of *Henry VIII.* and the concluding vision of Gray's Bard.

## CHARACTERS IN *KENILWORTH*.

### HISTORICAL.

ELIZABETH (1533-1603), Queen of England.

ROBERT DUDLEY (1532-1588), fifth son of the Duke of Northumberland, created Earl of Leicester in 1564. He was Elizabeth's favourite peer

AMY ROBSART (1532-1560) married Robert Dudley in 1550 and met her death in 1560, so that she was never Countess of Leicester, as her husband was created an Earl after her death.

THOMAS RADCLIFFE (1526-1583), third Earl of Sussex, Leicester's rival for the favour of Elizabeth

GEORGE TALBOT (1528-1590), sixth Earl of Shrewsbury, created Earl Marshall of England in 1572.

EDWARD DE VERE (1550-1604), seventeenth Earl of Oxford. He was, as described by Scott, a 'young unthrift' but also a lyric poet and hereditary Great Chamberlain of England. He does not play an important part in *Kenilworth*. See p 91

WILLIAM CECIL, Lord Burleigh (1520-1598), Elizabeth's Lord High Treasurer and Chief Secretary of State. He was the most famous of the statesmen old who appeared "in bearded majesty" to Gray's Bard.

HENRY CAREY (1524-1596), first Lord Hunsdon, nephew of Anne Boleyn and therefore first cousin to Elizabeth, who was very fond of him and created him a Baron in 1558 and appointed him Warden of the East Marches of Scotland in 1568. He distinguished himself in the suppression of the northern rebellion.

WALTER RALEIGH (1552-1598), courtier, soldier, sailor, and man of letters. He served in France in the Huguenot

army in 1569, but did not go to Ireland until 1581 and was not knighted before 1584.

RICHARD MASTER or MASTERS (d 1588), was appointed physician to Elizabeth in 1559.

ANTHONY FOSTER, according to his epitaph in Cumnor Church, was Lord of Cumnor and a gentleman of high merit, eloquent, musical and charitable. But Ashmole, whom Scott follows, says that he with Varney was guilty of the murder of Amy Robsart.

#### UNHISTORICAL.

RICHARD VARNEY, knighted by Elizabeth, Master of the Horse to Leicester. He is the villain of the novel.

EDMUND TRESSILIAN, a young gentleman of Cornwall and adherent of Sussex. Before the story opened, he was engaged to Amy Robsart. He is the nominal hero of the story.

SIR HUGH ROBSART, of Lidcote Hall, Devonshire, father of Amy Robsart. Historically her father was Sir John Robsart of Norfolk.

NICHOLAS BLOUNT, knighted by Elizabeth, Master of the Horse to Sussex

ALASCO, quack, astiologer, poisoner and alchemist. He was modelled by Scott on Dr Julio, Leicester's Italian physician, who was supposed to compound poisons for his master.

WAYLAND, a smith who had learned secrets of medicine when in the service of Alasco. His name is taken from an old Teutonic legend of a mysterious invisible smith. He eventually married

JANET FOSTER, daughter of Anthony Foster.

MICHAEL LAMBOURNE, a soldier of fortune lately returned from the Spanish Main. He takes service under Varney by whom he is killed.

GILES GOSLING, landlord of the Black Bear at Cumnor.

DICKON SLUDGE or FLIBBERTIGIBBET, an impish boy who was for a time the associate of Wayland Smith.

LAWRENCE STAPES, a jailer at Kenilworth.

# KENILWORTH.

## CHAPTER I.

*[The story opens in the reign of Elizabeth at Cumnor, a village four miles from Oxford. Giles Gosling, the landlord of an old inn called the Black Bear, conducts a traveller into the principal room, where a number of villagers are assembled. The stranger appears to have led a wild life in foreign parts and turns out to be Michael Lambourne the landlord's nephew, who had left the village in the end of Mary's reign with a bad reputation. To celebrate the scapegrace's return Giles Gosling invites to supper the whole company, including a mysterious guest called Tressilhan, who had been two days in the inn and never spoken a word, save to ask for his food and his reckoning. At the supper Lambourne asks after some of his old acquaintances and finds that they have fallen in the clutches of the law. (Other portions of the story omitted from the text are very briefly related in the notes at the end).]*

"NAY, after these baulks," said Michael Lambourne, "I need hardly enquire after Tony Foster; for when ropes, and crossbow shafts, and pursuivant's warrants, and such like gear, were so rife, Tony could hardly 'scape them." •

"Which Tony Foster mean you?" said the innkeeper.

"Why, he they called Tony Fire-the-Fagot, because he brought a light to kindle the pile round Latimer and Ridley, when the wind blew out Jack Thong's torch, and no man else would give him light for love or money."

"Tony Foster lives and thrives," said the host.—  
"But, kinsman, I would not have you call him Tony Fire-the-Fagot, if you would not brook the stab."

"How! is he grown ashamed on't?" said Lambourne; "why, he was wont to boast of it, and say he liked as well to see a roasted heretic as a roasted ox."

"Ay, but, kinsman, that was in Mary's time," replied the landlord, "when Tony's father was Reeve here to the Abbot of Abingdon. But since that, Tony married  
10 a pure precisian, and is as good a Protestant, I warrant you, as the best"

"Then he hath prospered, I warrant him," said Lambourne.

"Prospered, quotha!" said the mercer; "why, you remember Cumnor-Place, the old mansion-house beside the churchyard?"

"By the same token, I robbed the orchard three times—what of that?—It was the old Abbot's residence when there was plague or sickness at Abingdon."

20 "Ay," said the host, "but that has been long over; and Anthony Foster hath a right in it, and lives there by some grant from a great courtier, who had the churchlands from the crown; and there he dwells, and has as little to do with any poor wight in Cumnor, as if he were himself a belted knight."

"Nay," said the mercer, "it is not altogether pride in Tony neither—there is a fair lady in the case, and Tony will scarce let the light of day look on her"

"How!" said Tressilian, who now for the first time  
30 interfered in their conversation, "did ye not say this Foster was married, and to a precisian?"

"Married he was, and to as bitter a precisian as ever ate flesh in Lent; and a cat-and-dog life she led with

Tony, as men said. But she is dead, rest be with her, and Tony hath but a shlp of a daughter ; so it is thought he means to wed this stranger, that men keep such a coil about."

"And why so ?—I mean, why do they keep a coil about her ?" said Tressilian.

"Why, I wot not," answered the host, "except that men say she is as beautiful as an angel, and no one knows whence she comes, and every one wishes to know why she is kept so closely mewed up. For my part, I never 10 saw her—you have, I think, Master Goldthred ?"

"That I have, old boy," said the mercer. "Look you, I was ridng hither from Abingdon—I passed under the east oriel window of the old mansion—It was not the common path I took, but one through the Park ; for the postern-door was upon the latch, and I thought I might take the privilege of an old comrade to ride across through the trees, both for shading, as the day was somewhat hot, and for avoiding of dust, because I had on my peach-coloured doublet, pinked out with cloth of 20 gold."

"Which garment," said Michael Lambourne, "thou wouldst willingly make twinkle in the eyes of a fair dame. Ah ! villain, thou wilt never leave thy old tricks"

"Not so—not so," said the mercer, with a smirking laugh ; "not altogether so—but curiosity, thou knowest, and a strain of compassion withal,—for the poor young lady sees nothing from morn to even but Tony Foster, with his scowling black brows, his bull's head, and his 30 bandy legs."

"And thou wouldst willingly show her a dapper body, in a silken jerkin—a limb like a short-legged hen's, in a

cordovan boot, and a round, simpering, what-d'ye-lack sort of a countenance, set off with a velvet bonnet, a Turkey feather, and a gilded brooch ? ”

“ Nay, now, you are jealous of me, Mike,” said Goldthred ; “ and yet my luck was but what might have happened to thee, or any man.”

“ Marry confound thine impudence,” retorted Lambourne ; “ thou wouldst not compare thy pudding face, and sarsenet manners, to a gentleman, and a soldier ? ”

10 “ Nay, my good sir,” said Tressilian, “ let me beseech you will not interrupt the gallant citizen , methinks he tells his tale so well, I could hearken to him till midnight ”

“ It's more of your favour than of my desert,” answered Master Goldthred ; “ but since I give you pleasure, worthy Master Tressilian, I shall proceed.—And so, sir, as I passed under the great painted window, leaving my rein loose on my ambling palfrey's neck, never credit me, sir, if there did not stand there the person of as fair a woman as ever crossed mine eyes.”

20 “ May I ask her appearance, sir ? ” said Tressilian.

“ O, sir,” replied Master Goldthred, “ I promise you, she was in gentlewoman's attire—a very quaint and pleasing dress, that might have served the Queen herself ; for she had a forepart with body and sleeves, of ginger-coloured satin, which, in my judgment, must have cost by the yard some thirty shillings, lined with murrey taffeta, and laid down and guarded with two broad laces of gold and silver. And her hat, sir, was truly the best fashioned thing that I have seen in these  
30 parts, being of tawny taffeta, embroidered with scorpions of Venice gold, and having a border garnished with gold fringe.”

“ I did not ask you of her attire, sir,” said Tressilian,

who had shown some impatience during this conversation, "but of her complexion—the colour of her hair, her features"

"Touching her complexion," answered the mercer, "I am not so special certain; but I marked that her fan had an ivory handle, curiously inlaid;—and then again, as to the colour of her hair, why, I can warrant, be its hue what it might, that she wore above it a net of green silk, parcel twisted with gold."

"A most mercer-like memory," said Lambourne: 10  
"the gentleman asks him of the lady's beauty, and he talks of her fine clothes!"

"I tell thee," said the mercer, somewhat disconcerted, "I had little time to look at her; for just as I was about to give her the good time of day, and for that purpose had puckered my features with a smile"—

"Like those of a jackanape simpering at a chestnut," said Michael Lambourne.

→"Up started of a sudden," continued Goldthred, without heeding the interruption, "Tony Foster himself, 20  
with a cudgel in his hand"—

"And broke thy head across, I hope, for thine impertinence," said his entertainer.

"That were more easily said than done," answered Goldthred, indignantly; "no, no—there was no breaking of heads—it's true, he advanced his cudgel, and spoke of laying on, and asked why I did not keep the public road, and such like; and I would have knocked him over the pate handsomely for his pains, only for the lady's presence, who might have swooned, for what I know." 30

"Now, out upon thee for a faint-spirited slave!" said Lambourne; "what adventurous knight ever thought of the lady's terror, when he went to thwack



giant, dragon, or magician, in her presence, and for her deliverance ? There thou hast missed the rarest opportunity ! ”

“ Take it thyself, then, bully Mike,” answered Goldthred—“ Yonder is the enchanted manor, and the dragon, and the lady, all at thy service, if thou darest venture on them ”

“ Why, so I would for a quartern of sack,” said the soldier—“ Or, stay—I am foully out of linen—wilt thou  
10 bet a piece of Hollands against these five angels, that I go not up to the Hall to-morrow, and force Tony Foster to introduce me to his fair guest ? ”

“ I accept your wager,” said the mercer ; “ and I think, though thou hadst even the impudence of the devil, I shall gam on thee this bout. Our landlord here shall hold stakes, and I will stake down gold till I send the linen.”

“ I will hold stakes on no such matter,” said Gosling.  
“ Good, now, my kinsman, drink your wine in quiet,  
20 and let such ventures alone. I promise you, Master Foster hath interest enough to lay you up in lavender in the Castle at Oxford, or to get your legs made acquainted with the town-stocks.”

“ That would be but renewing an old intimacy ; for Mike’s shins and the town’s wooden pinfold have been well known to each other ere now,” said the mercer ; “ but he shall not budge from his wager, unless he means to pay forfeit ”

“ Forfeit ? ” said Lambourne ; “ I scorn it. I value  
30 Tony Foster’s wrath no more than a shelled pea-cod.”

“ I would gladly pay your halves of the risk, sir,” said Tressilian, “ to be permitted to accompany you on the adventure.”

"In what would that advantage you, sir?" answered Lambourne.

"In nothing, sir," said Tressilian, "unless to mark the skill and valour with which you conduct yourself."

"Nay, if it pleases you to see a trout tickled," answered Lambourne, "I care not how many witness my skill. And so here I drink success to my enterprise."

The draught which Michael Lambourne took upon this occasion had been preceded by so many others, that <sup>10</sup> reason tottered on her throne. He swore one or two incoherent oaths at the mercer, who refused, reasonably enough, to pledge him to a sentiment which inferred the loss of his own wager.

"Wilt thou chop logic with me," said Lambourne, "thou knave, with no more brains than are in a skein of ravelled silk? by Heaven, I will cut thee into fifty yards of galloon lace!"

But as he attempted to draw his sword for this doughty purpose, Michael Lambourne was seized upon by the <sup>20</sup> tapster and the chamberlain, and conveyed to his own apartment, there to sleep himself sober at his leisure.

## CHAPTER II.

"AND how doth your kinsman, good mine host?" said Tressilian, when Giles Gosling first appeared in the public room, on the morning following the revel which we described in the last chapter. "Is he well, and will he abide by his wager?"

"For well, sir, he started two hours since, and has visited I know not what purleus of his old companions ;

hath but now returned, and is at this instant breakfasting on new-laid eggs and muscadine, and for his wager, I caution you as a friend to have little to do with that, or indeed with aught that Mike proposes. Wherefore, I counsel you to a warm breakfast upon a culiss, which shall restore the tone of the stomach; and let my nephew and Master Goldthred swagger about their wager as they list”

“It seems to me, mine host,” said Tressilian, “that  
10 you know not well what to say about this kinsman of yours; and that you can neither blame nor commend him without some twinge of conscience.”

“You have spoken truly, Master Tressilian,” replied Giles Gosling. “There is Natural Affection whimpering into one ear, ‘Giles, Giles, why wilt thou take away the good name of thy own nephew?’ And then, again, comes Justice, and says, ‘Here is a worthy guest as ever came to the bonny Black Bear, one who never challenged a reckoning, and wilt thou, being a publican,  
20 having paid scot and lot these thirty years in the town of Cumnor, and being at this instant head-borough, wilt thou suffer this guest of guests to fall into the meshes of thy nephew, who is known for a swasher and a desperate Dick, a carder and a dicer, a professor of the seven damnable sciences, if ever man took degrees in them?’ No, by Heaven! I might wink, and let him catch such a small butterfly as Goldthred; but thou, my guest, shalt be forewarned, forearmed, so thou wilt but listen to thy trusty host”

30 “Why, mine host, thy counsel shall not be cast away,” replied Tressilian; “however, I must uphold my share in this wager, having once passed my word to that effect. But lend me, I pray, some of thy counsel—

This Foster, who or what is he, and why makes he such mystery of his female inmate ? ”

“Troth,” replied Gosling, “I can add but little to what you heard last night. He was one of Queen Mary’s Papists, and now he is one of Queen Elizabeth’s Protestants, he was an on-hanger of the Abbot of Abingdon, and now he lives as master of the Manor-house. Above all, he was poor and is rich. Folk talk of private apartments in his old waste mansion-house, bedizened fine enough to serve the Queen, God bless her. 10 I think it likely my kinsman and he will quarrel, if Mike thrust his acquaintance on him ; and I am sorry that you, my worthy Master Tressilian, will still think of going in my nephew’s company.”

Tressilian again answered him, that he would proceed with great caution, and that he should have no fears on his account ; in short, he bestowed on him all the customary assurances with which those who are determined on a rash action are wont to parry the advice of their friends. 20

Meantime, the traveller accepted the landlord’s invitation, and had just finished the excellent breakfast, which was served to him and Gosling by pretty Cicely, the beauty of the bar, when the hero of the preceding night, Michael Lambourne, entered the apartment.

“You hold your purpose, then, of visiting your old acquaintance ? ” said Tressilian to the adventurer.

“Ay, sir,” replied Lambourne ; “when stakes are made, the game must be played ; that is gamester’s law, all over the world. You, sir, unless my memory 30 fails me (for I did steep it somewhat too deeply in the sack-butt), took some share in my hazard ? ”

“I propose to accompany you in your adventure,”

said Tressilian, "if you will do me so much grace as to permit me ; and I have staked my share of the forfeit in the hands of our worthy host."

The village of Cumnor is pleasantly built on a hill, and in a wooded park closely adjacent was situated the ancient mansion occupied at this time by Anthony Foster. The park was then full of large trees, and in particular, of ancient and mighty oaks, which stretched their giant arms over the high wall surrounding the  
10 demesne, thus giving it a melancholy, secluded, and monastic appearance. The avenue was grown up with grass, and, in one or two places, interrupted by piles of withered brushwood. Besides the general effect of desolation which is so strongly impressed, whenever we behold the contrivances of man wasted and obliterated by neglect, the size of the trees, and the outspreading extent of their boughs, diffused a gloom over the scene, even when the sun was at the highest.

"This wood is as dark as a wolf's mouth," said he to  
20 Tressilian, as they walked together slowly along the solitary and broken approach, and had just come in sight of the monastic front of the old mansion, with its shafted windows and brick walls overgrown with ivy and creeping shrubs. "And yet," continued Lambourne, "it is fairly done on the part of Foster too ; for since he chooses not visitors, it is right to keep his place in a fashion that will invite few to trespass upon his privacy. But here we are, and we must make the best on't."

While he thus spoke, they had entered a large orchard  
30 which surrounded the house on two sides, though the trees were overgrown and mossy, and seemed to bear little fruit. Lambourne knocked roundly and boldly at the huge door of the mansion. It was not until they

had knocked more than once, that an aged sour-visaged domestic reconnoitred them through a small square hole in the door, well secured with bars of iron, and demanded what they wanted.

"To speak with Master Foster instantly, on pressing business of the state," was the ready reply of Michael Lambourne.

In a short time the servant returned, and drawing with a careful hand both bolt and bar, opened the gate, which admitted them through an archway into a square 10 court, surrounded by buildings. Opposite to the arch was another door, which the serving-man in like manner unlocked, and thus introduced them into a stone-paved parlour, where there was but little furniture, and that of the rudest and most ancient fashion.

Tressilian and his guide waited some space in the apartment ere the present master of the mansion at length made his appearance. Prepared as he was to see an inauspicious and ill-looking person, the ugliness of Anthony Foster considerably exceeded what Tres- 20 silian had anticipated. He was of middle stature, built strongly, but so clumsily as to border on deformity, and to give all his motions the ungainly awkwardness of a left-legged and left-handed man. His hair, in arranging which men at that time, as at present, were very nice and curious, instead of being carefully cleaned and disposed into short curls, or else set up on end, as is represented in old paintings, in a manner resembling that used by fine gentlemen of our own day, escaped in sable negligence from under a furred bonnet, and hung 30 in elf-locks, which seemed strangers to the comb, over his rugged brows, and around his very singular and unprepossessing countenance. His keen dark eyes were

deep set beneath broad and shaggy eyebrows, and as they were usually bent on the ground, seemed as if they were themselves ashamed of the expression natural to them, and were desirous to conceal it from the observation of men. Upon the whole, as Tressilian could not help acknowledging to himself, the Anthony Foster who now stood before them was the last person, judging from personal appearance, upon whom one would have chosen to intrude an unexpected and undesired visit.

10 His attire was a doublet of russet leather, like those worn by the better sort of country folk, girt with buff belt, in which was stuck on the right side a long knife, or dudgeon dagger, and on the other a cutlass. He raised his eyes as he entered the room, and fixed a keenly penetrating glance upon his two visitors, then cast them down as if counting his steps, while he advanced slowly into the middle of the room, and said, in a low and smothered tone of voice, "Let me pray you, gentlemen, to tell me the cause of this visit"

20 He looked as if he expected the answer from Tressilian, whose superior air of breeding and dignity shone through the disguise of an inferior dress. But it was Michael who replied to him, with the easy familiarity of an old friend, and a tone which seemed unembarrassed by any doubt of the most cordial reception.

"Ha! my dear friend and ingie, Tony Foster!" he exclaimed, seizing upon the unwilling hand, and shaking it with such emphasis as almost to stagger the sturdy frame of the person whom he addressed; "how fares  
30 it with you for many a long year?—What! have you altogether forgotten your friend, gossip, and playfellow, Michael Lambourne?"

"Michael Lambourne!" said Foster, looking at him

a moment; then dropping his eyes, and with little ceremony extricating his hand from the friendly grasp of the person by whom he was addressed, "are you Michael Lambourne?"

"Ay; sure as you are Anthony Foster," replied Lambourne.

"'Tis well," answered his sullen host; "and what may Michael Lambourne expect from his visit hither?"

"*Voto a Dios*," answered Lambourne, "I expected a better welcome than I am like to meet, I think." 10

"Why, thou gallows-bird—thou jail-rat—thou friend of the hangman and his customers," replied Foster, "hast thou the assurance to expect countenance from any one whose neck is beyond the compass of a Tyburn tippet?"

"It may be with me as you say," replied Lambourne; "and suppose I grant it to be so for argument's sake, I were still good enough society for mine ancient friend Anthony Fire-the-Fagot, though he be, for the present, by some indescribable title, the master of Cumnor-Place." 20

"Hark you, Michael Lambourne," said Foster; "you are a gambler now, and live by the counting of chances—Compute me the odds that I do not, on this instant, throw you out of that window into the ditch there."

"Twenty to one that you do not," answered the sturdy visitor.

"And wherefore, I pray you?" demanded Anthony Foster, setting his teeth and compressing his lips, like one who endeavours to suppress some violent internal emotion. 30

"Because," said Lambourne, coolly, "you dare not for your life lay a finger on me. I am younger and



stronger than you, and have in me a double portion of the fighting devil, though not, it may be, quite so much of the undermining fiend, that finds an underground way to his purpose—who hides halts under folk's pillows, and who puts ratsbane into their porridge, as the stage-play says."

Foster looked at him earnestly, then turned away, and paced the room twice, with the same steady and considerate pace with which he had entered it; then suddenly came back, and extended his hand to Michael Lambourne, saying, "Be not wroth with me, good Mike; I did but try whether thou hadst parted with aught of thine old and honourable frankness, which your enviers and backbiters called saucy impudence. I will pray your company in another chamber, honest Mike, for what I have to say to thee is for thy private ear.—Meanwhile, I pray you, sir, to abide us in this apartment."

### CHAPTER III.

THE room into which the Master of Cumnor-Place conducted his worthy visitant, was of greater extent than that in which they had at first conversed, and had yet more the appearance of dilapidation. Large oaken presses, filled with shelves of the same wood, surrounded the room, and had, at one time, served for the arrangement of a numerous collection of books, many of which yet remained, but deprived of their costly clasps and bindings, and tossed together in heaps upon the shelves, as things altogether disregarded, and abandoned to the pleasure of every spoiler. The very presses themselves

seemed to have incurred the hostility of those enemies of learning, who had destroyed the volumes with which they had been heretofore filled. They were mantled with cobwebs, and covered with dust.

"The men who wrote these books," said Lambourne, "little thought whose keeping they were to fall into."

"Nor what yeoman's service they were to do me," quoth Anthony Foster—"the cook hath used them for scouring his pewter, and the groom hath had nought else to clean my boots with this many a month past."

"And yet," said Lambourne, "I have been in cities where such learned commodities would have been deemed too good for such offices."

"Pshaw, pshaw," answered Foster, "they are Popish trash, every one of them,—private studies of the mumping old Abbot of Abingdon. The nineteenthly of a pure gospel sermon were worth a cartload of such rakings of the kennel of Rome."

"Gad-a-mercy, Master Tony Fire-the-Fagot!" said Lambourne, by way of reply.

Foster scowled darkly at him, as he replied, "Hark ye, friend Mike; forget that name, and the passage which it relates to, if you would not have our newly-revived comradeship die a sudden and a violent death."

"Why," said Michael Lambourne, "you were wont to glory in the share you had in the death of the two old heretical bishops."

"That," said his comrade, "was while I was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. Mr. Melchisedek Maultext compared my misfortune in that matter to that of the Apostle Paul, who kept the clothes of the witnesses who stoned Saint Stephen."

"I prithee peace, Foster," said Lambourne; "for I know not how it is, I have a sort of creeping comes over my skin when I hear the devil quote Scripture; and besides, man, how couldst thou have the heart to quit that convenient old religion, which you could slip off or on as easily as your glove? Do I not remember how you were wont to carry your conscience to confession, as duly as the month came round? and when thou hadst it scoured, and burnished, and whitewashed by  
10 the priest, thou wert ever ready for the worst villainy which could be devised, like a child who is always readiest to rush into the mire when he has got his Sunday's clean jerkin on."

"Trouble not thyself about my conscience," said Foster, "it is a thing thou canst not understand, having never had one of thine own. But let us rather to the point, and say to me, in one word, what is thy business with me, and what hopes have drawn thee hither?"

"The hope of bettering myself, to be sure," answered  
20 Lambourne. "Look you, this purse has all that is left of as round a sum as a man would wish to carry in his slop-pouch. You are here well established, it would seem, and, as I think, well befriended, for men talk of thy being under some special protection. Now I know such protection is not purchased for nought; you must have services to render for it, and in these I propose to help thee."

"But how if I lack no assistance from thee, Mike? I think thy modesty might suppose that were a case  
30 possible."

"That is to say," retorted Lambourne, "that you would engross the whole work, rather than divide the reward—but be not over-greedy, Anthony. Covetous-

ness bursts the sack, and spills the grain. Look you, when the huntsman goes to kill a stag, he takes with him more dogs than one.—He has the stanch lyme-hound to track the wounded buck over hill and dale, but he hath also the fleet gaze-hound to kill him at view. Thou art the lyme-hound, I am the gaze-hound, and thy patron will need the aid of both, and can well afford to requite it. Thou hast deep sagacity—an unrelenting purpose—a steady long-breathed malignity of nature, that surpasses mine. But then, I am the bolder, the 10 quicker, the more ready, both at action and expedient. Separate, our properties are not so perfect; but unite them, and we drive the world before us. How sayst thou—shall we hunt in couples?”

“It is a currish proposal—thus to thrust thyself upon my private matters,” replied Foster; “but thou wert ever an ill-nurtured whelp.”

“You shall have no cause to say so, unless you spurn my courtesy,” said Michael Lambourne; “but if so, keep thee well from me, Sir Knight, as the romance has 20 it. I will either share your counsels or traverse them; for I have come here to be busy, either with thee or against thee.”

“Well,” said Anthony Foster, “since thou dost leave me so fair a choice, I will rather be thy friend than thine enemy. Thou art right; I *can* prefer thee to the service of a patron, who has enough of means to make us both, and an hundred more. And, to say truth, thou art well qualified for his service. Boldness and dexterity he demands—the justice-books bear 30 witness in thy favour; no starting at scruples in his service—why, who ever suspected thee of a conscience?—an assurance he must have, who would follow a courtier

—and thy brow is as impenetrable as a Milan visor. There is but one thing I would fain see amended in thee.”

“And what is that, my most precious friend Anthony?” replied Lambourne; “for I swear by the pillow of the Seven Sleepers, I will not be slothful in amending it.”

“Why, you gave a sample of it even now,” said Foster. “Your speech twangs too much of the old stamp, and you garnish it ever and anon with singular oaths, that savour of Papistrie. Besides, your exterior man is altogether too deboshed and irregular to become one of his lordship’s followers, since he has a reputation to keep up in the eye of the world. You must somewhat reform your dress, upon a more grave and composed fashion. You must enlarge the brim of your beaver, and diminish the superfluity of your trunk-hose—go to church, or, which will be better, to meeting, at least once a month—protest only upon your faith and conscience—lay aside your swashing look, and never touch the hilt of your sword, but when you would draw the carnal weapon in good earnest.”

“By this light, Anthony, thou art mad,” answered Lambourne, “and hast described rather the gentleman-usher to a puritan’s wife, than the follower of an ambitious courtier! He must ruffle it in another sort that would walk to court in a nobleman’s train.”

“O, content you, sir,” replied Foster, “there is a change since you knew the English world; and there are those who can hold their way through the boldest courses, and the most secret, and yet never a swaggering word, or an oath, or a profane word in their conversation.”

At this moment their conversation was interrupted by a scream from the next apartment.

“By the holy Cross of Abingdon,” exclaimed Anthony Foster, forgetting his Protestantism in his alarm, “I am a ruined man !”

So saying, he rushed into the apartment whence the scream issued, followed by Michael Lambourne. But to account for the sounds which interrupted their conversation, it is necessary to recede a little way in our narrative.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Lambourne accompanied Foster into the library, they left Tressilian alone in the ancient parlour. His dark eye followed them forth of the apartment with a glance of contempt. “These are the associates, Amy,”—it was thus he communed with himself,—“to which thy cruel levity—thine unthunking and most unmerited falsehood, has condemned him, of whom his friends once hoped far other things.—I will save thee from thy betrayer, and from thyself—I will restore thee to thy parent—to thy God. I cannot bid the bright star again sparkle in the sphere it has shot from, but”——

A slight noise in the apartment interrupted his reverie ; he looked round, and in the beautiful and richly-attired female who entered at that instant by a side-door, he recognised the object of his search. The first impulse arising from this discovery, urged him to conceal his face with the collar of his cloak, until he should find a favourable moment of making himself known. But his purpose was disconcerted by the young lady (she was

not above eighteen years old), who ran joyfully towards him, and, pulling him by the cloak, said playfully, "Nay, my sweet friend, after I have waited for you so long, you come not to my bower to play the masquer.—You are arraigned of treason to true love and fond affection ; and you must stand up at the bar, and answer it with face uncovered—how say you, guilty or not ? "

" Alas, Amy ! " said Tressilian, in a low and melancholy tone, as he suffered her to draw the mantle from  
10 his face. The sound of his voice, and still more the unexpected sight of his face, changed in an instant the lady's playful mood—She staggered back, turned as pale as death, and put her hands before her face. Tressilian was himself for a moment much overcome, but seeming suddenly to remember the necessity of using an opportunity which might not again occur, he said in a low tone, " Amy, fear me not."

" Why should I fear you ? " said the lady, withdrawing her hands from her beautiful face, which, was  
20 now covered with crimson,—“ why should I fear you, Mr. Tressilian ?—or wherefore have you intruded yourself into my dwelling, uninvited, sir, and unwished for ? ”

" Your dwelling, Amy ! " said Tressilian. " Alas ! is a prison your dwelling ?—a prison, guarded by one of the most sordid of men, but not a greater wretch than his employer ! "

" This house is mine," said Amy, " mine while I choose to inhabit it—If it is my pleasure to live in seclusion, who shall gainsay me ? "

30 " Your father, maiden," answered Tressilian, " your broken-hearted father ; who dispatched me in quest of you with that authority which he cannot exert in person. Here is his letter, written while he blessed his

pain of body which somewhat stunned the agony of his mind."

"The pain!—is my father then ill?" said the lady.

"So ill," answered Tressilian, "that even your utmost haste may not restore him to health; but all shall be instantly prepared for your departure, the instant you yourself will give consent."

"Tressilian," answered the lady, "I cannot, I must not, I dare not leave this place. Go back to my father—tell him I will obtain leave to see him within twelve 10 hours from hence. Go back, Tressilian—tell him I am well, I am happy—happy could I think he was so—tell him not to fear that I will come, and in such a manner that all the grief Amy has given him shall be forgotten—the poor Amy is now greater than she dare name.—Go, good Tressilian—I have injured thee too, but believe me I have power to heal the wounds I have caused—I robbed you of a childish heart, which was not worthy of you, and I can repay the loss with honours and advancement." 20

"Do you say this to me, Amy?—Do you offer me pageants of idle ambition, for the quiet peace you have robbed me of?—But be it so—I came not to upbraid, but to serve and to free you.—You cannot disguise it from me; you are a prisoner. Otherwise your kind heart—for it was once a kind heart—would have been already at your father's bedside.—Come—poor, deceived, unhappy maiden!—all shall be forgot—all shall be forgiven. Fear not my importunity for what regarded our contract—it was a dream, and I 30 have awaked—But come—your father yet lives—Come, and one word of affection—one tear of penitence, will efface the memory of all that has passed."



"Have I not already said, Tressilian," replied she, "that I will surely come to my father, and that without farther delay than is necessary to discharge other and equally binding duties?—Go, carry him the news—I come as sure as there is light in heaven—that is, when I obtain permission."

"Permission?—permission to visit your father on his sick-bed, perhaps on his death-bed!" repeated Tressilian, impatiently; "and permission from whom?"  
10 —From the villain, who, under disguise of friendship, abused every duty of hospitality, and stole thee from thy father's roof!"

"Do him no slander, Tressilian!—He whom thou speakest of wears a sword as sharp as thine—sharper, vain man—for the best deeds thou hast ever done in peace or war were as unworthy to be named with his, as thy obscure rank to match itself with the sphere he moves in.—Leave me! Go, do mine errand to my father, and when he next sends to me, let him choose a  
20 more welcome messenger."

"Amy," replied Tressilian, calmly, "thou canst not move me by thy reproaches.—Tell me one thing, that I may bear at least one ray of comfort to my aged friend—This rank of his which thou dost boast—dost thou share it with him, Amy?—Does he claim a husband's right to control thy motions?"

"Stop thy base unmannered tongue!" said the lady; "to no question that derogates from my honour do I deign an answer."

30 "You have said enough in refusing to reply," answered Tressilian; "and mark me, unhappy as thou art, I am armed with thy father's full authority to command thy obedience, and I will save thee from the

slavery of sin and of sorrow, even despite of thyself, Amy."

"Menace no violence here!" exclaimed the lady, drawing back from him, and alarmed at the determination expressed in his look and manner; "threaten me not, Tressilian, for I have means to repel force."

"But not, I trust, the wish to use them in so evil a cause?" said Tressilian. "With thy will—thine uninfluenced, free, and natural will, Amy, thou canst not choose this state of slavery and dishonour—thou 10 hast been bound by some spell—entrapped by some deceit—art now detained by some compelled vow.—But thus I break the charm—Amy, in the name of thine excellent, thy broken-hearted father, I command thee to follow me!"

As he spoke, he advanced and extended his arm, as with the purpose of laying hold upon her. But she shrunk back from his grasp, and uttered the scream which brought into the apartment Lambourne and Foster.

20

The latter exclaimed in a tone betwixt entreaty and command, "Madam, what make you here out of bounds?—Retire—retire—there is life and death in this matter.—And you, friend, whoever you may be, leave this house—out with you, before my dagger's hilt and your costard become acquainted—Draw, Mike, and rid us of the knave!"

"Not I, on my soul," replied Lambourne; "he came hither in my company, and he is safe from me by cutter's law, at least till we meet again.—But hark ye, 30 my Cornish comrade, make yourself scarce—depart—vanish."

"Away, base groom!" said Tressilian—"And you,

madam, fare you well—what life lingers in your father's bosom will leave him at the news I have to tell."

He departed, the lady saying faintly as he left the room, "Tressilian, be not rash—say no scandal of me."

"Here is proper gear," said Foster. "I pray you go to your chamber, my lady, and let us consider how this is to be answered—nay, tarry not."

"I move not at your command, sir," answered the lady.

10 "Nay, but you must, fair lady," replied Foster; "excuse my freedom, but, by blood and nails, this is no time to strain courtesies—you *must* go to your chamber.—Mike, follow that meddling coxcomb, and as you desire to thrive, see him safely clear of the premises, while I bring this headstrong lady to reason—Draw thy tool, man, and after him."

"I'll follow him," said Michael Lambourne, "but for hurting a man I have drunk my morning's draught withal, 't is clean against my conscience." So saying,  
20 he left the apartment.

Tressilian, meanwhile, with hasty steps, pursued the first path which promised to conduct him through the wild and overgrown park. Haste and distress of mind led his steps astray, and instead of taking the avenue which led towards the village, he chose another, which, after he had pursued it for some time with a hasty and reckless step, conducted him to the other side of the demesne, where a postern-door opened through the wall, and led into the open country.

30 As Tressilian approached to try some means of opening the door, or climbing over it, he perceived there was a key put into the lock from the outside. It turned round, the bolt revolved, and a cavalier, who entered, muffled

in his riding-cloak, stood at once within four yards of him who was desirous of going out. They exclaimed at once, in tones of resentment and surprise, the one "Varney!" the other "Tressilian!"

"What make you here?" was the stern question put by the stranger to Tressilian, when the moment of surprise was past—"What make you here, where your presence is neither expected nor desired?"

"Nay, Varney," replied Tressilian, "what make *you* here? Are you come to triumph over the innocence 10 you have destroyed?—Draw, dog, and defend thyself!"

Tressilian drew his sword as he spoke, but Varney only laid his hand on the hilt of his own, as he replied, "Thou art mad, Tressilian—I own appearances are against me, but by every oath a priest can make, or a man can swear, Mistress Amy Robsart hath had no injury from me; and in truth I were somewhat loath to hurt you in this cause—Thou know'st I can fight."

"I have heard thee say so, Varney," replied Tressilian; "but now, methinks, I would fain have some 20 better evidence than thine own word."

"That shall not be lacking, if blade and hilt be but true to me," answered Varney; and drawing his sword with the right hand, he threw his cloak around his left, and attacked Tressilian with a vigour which, for a moment, seemed to give him the advantage of the combat. But this advantage lasted not long. Tressilian added to a spirit determined on revenge a hand and eye admirably well adapted to the use of the rapier; so that Varney, finding himself hard pressed in his turn, 30 endeavoured to avail himself of his superior strength by closing with his adversary. For this purpose, he hazarded the receiving one of Tressilian's passes in his

cloak, wrapt as it was around his arm, and ere his adversary could extricate his rapier thus entangled, he closed with him, shortening his own sword at the same time, with the purpose of dispatching him. But Tressilian was on his guard, and unsheathing his poniard, parried with the blade of that weapon the home-thrust which would otherwise have finished the combat. Varney, in his ill-advised attempt, received a fall so sudden and violent, that his sword flew several paces 10 from his hand, and ere he could recover his feet, that of his antagonist was pointed to his throat.

"Give me the instant means of relieving the victim of thy treachery," said Tressilian, "or take the last look of your Creator's blessed sun!"

And while Varney, too confused or too sullen to reply, made a sudden effort to arise, his adversary drew back his arm, and would have executed his threat, but that the blow was arrested by the grasp of Michael Lambourne, who, directed by the clashing of swords, had come up 20 just in time to save the life of Varney.

"Come, come, comrade," said Lambourne, "here is enough done, and more than enough—put up your fox, and let us be jogging—The Black Bear growls for us."

"Off, abject!" said Tressilian, striking himself free of Lambourne's grasp; "darest thou come betwixt me and mine enemy?"

"Abject! abject!" repeated Lambourne; "that shall be answered with cold steel whenever a bowl of sack has washed out memory of the morning's draught 30 that we had together. In the meanwhile, do you see, shog—tramp—begone—we are two to one."

He spoke truth, for Varney had taken the opportunity to regain his weapon, and Tressilian perceived it was

madness to press the quarrel farther against such odds. He took his purse from his side, and taking out two gold nobles, flung them to Lambourne; "There, carter, is thy morning wage—thou shalt not say thou hast been my guide unhired.—Varney, farewell—we shall meet where there are none to come betwixt us." So saying, he turned round and departed through the postern-door.

## CHAPTER V.

FOUR apartments, which occupied the western side of the old quadrangle at Cumnor-Place, had been fitted up with extraordinary splendour. Workmen sent from 10 London, and not permitted to leave the premises until the work was finished, had converted the apartments in that side of the building, from the dilapidated appearance of a dissolved monastic house, into the semblance of a royal palace. A mystery was observed in all these arrangements: the workmen came thither and returned by night, and all measures were taken to prevent the prying curiosity of the villagers from observing or speculating upon the changes which were taking place in the mansion. Accordingly, the secrecy desired was so 20 far preserved, that nothing got abroad but vague and uncertain reports, which were received and repeated, but without much credit being attached to them.

On the evening of which we treat, the new and highly decorated suite of rooms were, for the first time, illuminated, and that with a brilliancy which might have been visible half-a-dozen miles off, had not oaken shutters, carefully secured with bolt and padlock, and mantled with long curtains of silk and of velvet, deeply

fringed with gold, prevented the slightest gleam of radiance from being seen without.

The principal apartments were four in number, each opening into the other. Access was given to them by a large scale staircase of unusual length and height, which had its landing-place at the door of an antechamber, shaped somewhat like a gallery. This apartment the Abbot had used as an occasional council-room, but it was now beautifully wainscoted with dark foreign  
10 wood of a brown colour, and bearing a high polish, said to have been brought from the Western Indies, and to have been wrought in London with infinite difficulty, and much damage to the tools of the workmen.

From this antechamber opened a banquetting room of moderate size, but brilliant enough to dazzle the eyes of the spectator with the richness of its furniture. The walls, lately so bare and ghastly, were now clothed with hangings of sky-blue velvet and silver ; the chairs were of ebony, richly carved, with cushions corresponding to  
20 the hangings ; and the place of the silver sconces which enlightened the antechamber was supplied by a huge chandelier of the same precious metal. The floor was covered with a Spanish foot-cloth, or carpet, on which flowers and fruits were represented in such glowing and natural colours, that you hesitated to place the foot on such exquisite workmanship.

The third apartment was called the withdrawing-room. It was hung with the finest tapestry, representing the fall of Phaeton ; for the looms of Flanders were now  
30 much occupied on classical subjects. The principal seat of this apartment was a chair of state, raised a step or two from the floor, and large enough to contain two persons. It was surmounted by a canopy, which, as

well as the cushions, side-curtains, and the very foot-cloth, was composed of crimson velvet, embroidered with seed-pearl. On the top of the canopy were two coronets, resembling those of an earl and countess.

The divinity for whose sake this temple had been decorated was well worthy the cost and pains which had been bestowed. She was seated in the withdrawing-room which we have described, surveying with the pleased eye of natural and innocent vanity, the splendour which had been so suddenly created, as it were in her 10 honour. For, as her own residence at Cumnor-Place formed the cause of the mystery observed in all the preparations for opening these apartments, it was sedulously arranged, that, until she took possession of them, she should have no means of knowing what was going forward in that part of the ancient building, or of exposing herself to be seen by the workmen engaged in the decorations. She had been, therefore, introduced on that evening to a part of the mansion which she had never yet seen, so different from all the rest, that it 20 appeared, in comparison, like an enchanted palace. And when she first examined and occupied these splendid rooms, it was with the wild and unrestrained joy of a rustic beauty, who finds herself suddenly invested with a splendour which her most extravagant wishes had never imagined, and at the same time with the keen feeling of an affectionate heart, which knows that all the enchantment that surrounds her is the work of the great magician Love.

The Countess Amy, therefore,—for to that rank she 30 was exalted by her private but solemn union with England's proudest Earl,—had for a time flitted hastily from room to room, admiring each new proof of her lover



and her bridegroom's taste, and feeling that admiration enhanced, as she recollected that all she gazed upon was one continued proof of his ardent and devoted affection. —“How beautiful are these hangings!—How natural these paintings, which seem to contend with life!—How richly wrought is that plate, which looks as if all the galleons of Spain had been intercepted on the broad seas to furnish it forth!—And oh, Janet!” she exclaimed repeatedly to the daughter of Anthony Foster, 10 the close attendant, who with equal curiosity, but somewhat less ecstatic joy, followed on her mistress's footsteps —“O, Janet! how much more delightful to think, that all these fair things have been assembled by his love, for the love of me! and that this evening—this very evening, which grows darker every instant, I shall thank him more for the love that has created such an unimaginable paradise, than for all the wonders it contains.”

“The Lord is to be thanked first,” said the pretty 20 puritan, “who gave thee, lady, the kind-and courteous husband, whose love has done so much for thee. I, too, have done my poor share. But if you thus run wildly from room to room, the toil of my crimping and my curling pins will vanish like the frostwork on the window when the sun is high.”

“Thou sayest true, Janet,” said the young and beautiful Countess, stopping suddenly from her tripping race of enraptured delight, and looking at herself from head to foot in a large mirror.—“Thou sayest true, 30 Janet!” she answered, as she saw, with pardonable self-applause, the noble mirror reflect such charms as were seldom presented to its fair and polished surface: “I have more of the milkmaid than the countess, with

these cheeks flushed with haste, and all these brown curls, which you laboured to bring to order, straying as wild as the tendrils of an unpruned vine.—Come, Janet—we will practise state—we will go to the withdrawing-room, my good girl, and thou shalt put these rebel locks in order.”

They went to the withdrawing apartment accordingly, where the Countess playfully stretched herself upon the pile of Moorish cushions, half sitting, half reclining, half wrapt in her own thoughts, half listening to the 10 prattle of her attendant.

While she was in this attitude, and with a corresponding expression betwixt listlessness and expectation on her fine and intelligent features, you might have searched sea and land without finding anything half so expressive or half so lovely. The wreath of brilliants which mixed with her dark brown hair, did not match in lustre the hazel eye which a light brown eyebrow, pencilled with exquisite delicacy, and long eyelashes of the same colour, relieved and shaded. The milk-white pearls of the neck- 20 lace which she wore, the same which she had just received as a true-love token from her husband, were excelled in purity by her teeth, and by the colour of her skin.—“Now, have done with these busy fingers, Janet,” she said to her handmaiden, who was still officiously employed in bringing her hair and her dress into order.—“Have done, I say—I must see your father ere my lord arrives, and also Master Richard Varney, whom my lord has highly in his esteem—but I could tell that of him would lose him favour.” 30

“O do not do so, good my lady!” replied Janet; “leave him to God, who punishes the wicked in his own time; but do not you cross Varney’s path, for so

thoroughly hath he my lord's ear, that few have thriven who have thwarted his courses."

"And from whom had you this, my most righteous Janet?" said the Countess; "or why should I keep terms with so mean a gentleman as Varney, being, as I am, wife to his master and patron?"

"Nay, madam," replied Janet Foster, "your ladyship knows better than I—But I have heard my father say, he would rather cross a hungry wolf, than thwart  
10 Richard Varney in his projects."

## CHAPTER VI.

At this moment the folding-doors flew wide open, and a man of majestic mien, muffled in the folds of a long dark riding-cloak, entered the apartment.

There was some little displeasure and confusion on the Countess's brow, owing to her struggle with Varney's pertinacity; but it was exchanged for an expression of the purest joy and affection, as she threw herself into the arms of the noble stranger who entered, and clasping him to her bosom, exclaimed, "At length—at length  
20 thou art come!"

Varney discreetly withdrew as his lord entered, and Janet was about to do the same, when her mistress signed to her to remain. She took her place at the farther end of the apartment, and continued standing, as if ready for attendance.

Meanwhile the Earl, for he was of no inferior rank, returned his lady's caress with the most affectionate ardour, but affected to resist when she strove to take his cloak from him.

"Nay," she said, "but I will unmantle you,—I must see if you have kept your word to me, and come as the great Earl men call thee, and not as heretofore like a private cavalier."

"Thou art like the rest of the world, Amy," said the Earl, suffering her to prevail in the playful contest; "the jewels, and feathers, and silk, are more to them than the man whom they adorn—many a poor blade looks gay in a velvet scabbard."

"But so cannot men say of thee, thou noble Earl,"<sup>10</sup> said his lady, as the cloak dropped on the floor, and showed him dressed as princes when they ride abroad, "thou art the good and well-tried steel, whose inly worth deserves, yet disdains, its outward ornaments. Do not think Amy can love thee better in this glorious garb, than she did when she gave her heart to him who wore the russet-brown cloak in the woods of Devon."

"And thou too," said the Earl, as gracefully and majestically he led his beautiful Countess towards the chair of state, which was prepared for them both,—<sup>20</sup> "thou too, my love, hast donned a dress which becomes thy rank, though it cannot improve thy beauty. What think'st thou of our court taste?"

The lady cast a sidelong glance upon the great mirror as they passed it by, and then said, "I know not how it is, but I think not of my own person, while I look at the reflection of thine. Sit thou there," she said, as they approached the chair of state, "like a thing for men to worship and to wonder at."

"Ay, love," said the Earl, "if thou wilt share my<sup>30</sup> state with me."

"Not so," said the Countess; "I will sit on this footstool at thy feet, that I may spell over thy

splendour, and learn, for the first time, how princes are attired ”

And with a childish wonder, which her youth and rustic education rendered not only excusable but becoming, mixed as it was with a delicate show of the most tender conjugal affection, she examined and admired from head to foot the noble form and princely attire of him, who formed the proudest ornament of the court of England's Maiden Queen, renowned as it was for  
10 splendid courtiers, as well as for wise counsellors. Regarding affectionately his lovely bride, and gratified by her unrepressed admiration, the dark eye and noble features of the Earl expressed passions more gentle than the commanding and aspiring look which usually sate upon his broad forehead, and in the piercing brilliancy of his dark eye ; and he smiled at the simplicity which dictated the questions she put to him concerning the various ornaments with which he was decorated.

“ The embroidered strap, as thou callest it, around  
20 my knee,” he said, “ is the English Garter, an ornament which knigs are proud to wear. See, here is the star which belongs to it, and here the Diamond George, the jewel of the order. You have heard how King Edward and the Countess of Salisbury ”——

“ O, I know all that tale,” said the Countess, slightly blushing, “ and how a lady's garter became the proudest badge of English chivalry.”

“ Even so,” said the Earl ; “ and this most honourable Order I had the good hap to receive at the same time with  
30 three most noble associates, the Duke of Norfolk, the Marquis of Northampton, and the Earl of Rutland. I was the lowest of the four in rank—but what then ? —he that climbs a ladder must begin at the first round.”

"But this other fair collar, so richly wrought, with some jewel like a sheep hung by the middle attached to it, what," said the young Countess, "does that emblem signify?"

"This collar," said the Earl, "with its double fusilles interchanged with these knobs which are supposed to present flint-stones, sparkling with fire, and sustaining the jewel you enquire about, is the badge of the noble Order of the Golden Fleece."

"And this other collar, to what country does this fair jewel belong?"

"To a very poor one, my love," replied the Earl; "this is the Order of Saint Andrew, revived by the last James of Scotland. It was bestowed on me when it was thought the young widow of France and Scotland would gladly have wedded an English baron. And now, love, your wish is gratified, and you have seen your vassal in such of his trim array as accords with riding vestments, for robes of state and coronets are only for princely halls."

"But shall I," said the lady, "go with you to one of your castles?"

"Why, Amy," said the Earl, looking around, "are not these apartments decorated with sufficient splendour? I gave the most unbounded order, and, methinks, it has been indifferently well obeyed—but if thou canst tell me aught which remains to be done, I will instantly give direction."

"Nay, my lord, now you mock me," replied the Countess, "the gaiety of this rich lodging exceeds my imagination as much as it does my desert. But shall not your wife, my love—at least one day soon—be surrounded with the honour, which arises neither from

the toils of the mechanic who decks her apartment, nor from the silks and jewels with which your generosity adorns her, but which is attached to her place among the matronage, as the avowed wife of England's noblest Earl ? ”

“ One day ? ” said her husband,—“ Yes, Amy, my love, one day this shall surely happen ; and, believe me, thou canst not wish for that day more fondly than I. But, Amy, this cannot yet be ; and these dear but  
10 stolen interviews, are all I can give to the loveliest and the best beloved of her sex ”

“ But *why* can it not be ? ” urged the Countess, in the softest tones of persuasion —“ Why can it not immediately take place—this more perfect, this uninterrupted union, for which you say you wish, and which the laws of God and man alike command ?—Ah ! did you but desire it half as much as you say, mighty and favoured as you are, who, or what, should bar your attaining your wish ? ”

20 The Earl's brow was overcast.

“ Amy,” he said, “ you speak of what you understand not. We that toil in courts are like those who climb a mountain of loose sand—we dare make no halt until some projecting rock afford us a secure footing and resting-place—if we pause sooner, we slide down by our own weight, an object of universal derision. I stand high, but I stand not secure enough to follow my own inclination. To declare my marriage were to be the artificer of my own ruin.”

30 “ I have bidden Master Varney and Master Foster to sup with us, my lord,” said the Countess ; “ has it your approbation ? ”

“ What you do ever must have so, my sweet Amy,”

replied her husband : " and I am the better•pleased thou hast done them this grace, because Richard Varney is my sworn man, and a close brother of my secret council ; and for the present, I must needs repose much trust in this Anthony Foster "

" I had a boon to beg of thee, and a secret to tell thee, my dear lord," said the Countess, with a faltering accent.

" Let both be for to-morrow, my love," replied the Earl. " I see they open the folding-doors into the banqueting-parlour, and as I have ridden far and fast, 10 a cup of wine will not be unacceptable."

So saying he led his lovely wife into the next apartment, where Varney and Foster received them with the deepest reverences, which the first paid after the fashion of the court, and the second after that of the congregation. The Earl returned their salutation with the negligent courtesy of one long used to such homage ; while the Countess repaid it with a punctilious solicitude, which showed it was not quite so familiar to her.

## CHAPTER VII.

EARLY on the ensuing morning, Varney acted as the<sup>20</sup> Earl's chamberlain as well as his master of horse, though the latter was his proper office in that magnificent household, where knights and gentlemen of good descent were well contented to hold such menial situations, as nobles themselves held in that of the sovereign.

" Help me to do on a plainer riding-suit, Varney," said the Earl, as he laid aside his morning-gown, flowered with silk, and lined with sables, " and put these chains and fetters there " (pointing to the collars of the various



Orders which lay on the table) "into their place of security—my neck last night was wellnigh broke with the weight of them I am halt of the mind that they shall gall me no more. They are bonds which knaves have invented to fetter fools How think'st thou, Varney?"

"Faith, my good lord," said his attendant, "I think fetters of gold are like no other fetters—they are ever the weightier the welcomer"

"For all that, Varney," replied his master, "I am  
10 wellnigh resolved they shall bind me to the court no longer. What can further service and higher favour give me, beyond the rank and large estate which I have already secured?—What brought my father to the block, but that he could not bound his wishes within right and reason?—I have, you know, had mine own ventures and mine own escapes: I am wellnigh resolved to tempt the sea no farther, but sit me down in quiet on the shore."

"And gather cockle-shells, with Dan Cupid to aid  
20 you," said Varney

"How mean you by that, Varney?" said the Earl, somewhat hastily.

"Nay, my lord," said Varney, "be not angry with me. If your lordship is happy in a lady so rarely lovely, that in order to enjoy her company with somewhat more freedom, you are willing to part with all you have hitherto lived for, some of your poor servants may be sufferers."

"You seem discontented when I propose throwing  
30 up a dangerous game, which may end in the ruin of both of us"

"I, my lord?" said Varney: "surely I have no cause to regret your lordship's retreat!—It will not

be Richard Varney who will incur the displeasure of majesty, and the ridicule of the court—I would only have you yourself be assured, my lord, ere you take a step which cannot be retracted, that you consult your fame and happiness in the course you propose ”

“Speak on, then, Varney,” said the Earl; “I tell thee I have determined nothing, and will weigh all considerations on either side ”

“Well, then, my lord,” replied Varney, “we will suppose the step taken You have retired, we will say, 10 to some one of your most distant castles We will suppose, too, that your successful rival will be satisfied with abridging and cutting away the branches of the great tree which so long kept the sun from him. Well ; the late prime favourite of England, who wielded her general’s staff and controlled her parliaments, is now a rural baron, hunting, hawking, drinking fat ale with country esquires, and mustering his men at the command of the High Sheriff ”——

“Varney, forbear ! ” said the Earl. 20

“Nay, my lord, you must give me leave to conclude my picture—Sussex governs England—the Queen’s health fails—the succession is to be settled—a road is opened to ambition more splendid than ambition ever dreamed of—You hear all this as you sit by the hob, under the shade of your hall-chimney—You then begin to think what hopes you have fallen from, and what insignificance you have embraced—and all that you might look babies in the eyes of your fair wife oftener than once a fortnight.” 30

“I say, Varney,” said the Earl, “no more of this. I said not that the step, which my own ease and comfort would urge me to, was to be taken hastily, or without

due consideration to the public safety. Bear witness to me, Varney; I subdue my wishes of retirement, not because I am moved by the call of private ambition, but that I may preserve the position in which I may best serve my country at the hour of need—Order our horses presently—I will wear, as formerly, one of the livery cloaks, and ride before the portmantle—Thou shalt be master for the day, Varney—neglect nothing that can blind suspicion. We will to horse ere men are  
10 stirring. I will but take leave of my lady, and be ready. I impose a restraint on my own poor heart, and wound one yet more dear to me, but the patriot must subdue the husband.”

Having said this in a melancholy but firm accent, he left the dressing apartment, bent on taking a hasty farewell of the lovely Countess, and scarce daring to trust himself in private with her, to hear requests again urged, which he found it difficult to parry, yet which his recent conversation with his master of horse had  
20 determined him not to grant.

He found her in a white cymar of silk lined with furs, her little feet unstockinged and hastily thrust into slippers; her unbraided hair escaping from under her midnight coif, with little array but her own loveliness, rather augmented than diminished by the grief which she felt at the approaching moment of separation.

“Now, God be with thee, my dearest and loveliest!” said the Earl, scarce tearing himself from her embrace, yet again returning to fold her again and again in his  
30 arms, and again bidding farewell, and again returning to kiss and bid adieu once more. “The sun is on the verge of the blue horizon—I dare not stay.—Ere this I should have been ten miles from hence.”

Such were the words, with which at length he strove to cut short their parting interview

"You will not grant my request, then?" said the Countess "Ah, false knight! did ever lady, with bare foot in slipper, seek boon of a brave knight, yet return with denial?"

"Any thing, Amy, any thing thou canst ask I will grant," answered the Earl—"always excepting," he said, "that which might ruin us both."

"Nay," said the Countess, "I urge not my wish to 10 be acknowledged in the character which would make me the envy of England—as the wife, that is, of my brave and noble lord, the first as the most fondly beloved of English nobles—Let me but share the secret with my dear father!—Let me but end his misery on my unworthy account—they say he is ill, the good old kind-hearted man!"

"*They* say?" asked the Earl, hastily; "who says? Did not Varney convey to Sir Hugh all we dare at present tell him concerning your happiness and welfare? and has 20 he not told you that the good old knight was following, with good heart and health, his favourite and wonted exercise? Who has dared put other thoughts into your head?"

"O, no one, my lord, no one," said the Countess, something alarmed at the tone in which the question was put; "but yet, my lord, I would fain be assured by mine own eye-sight that my father is well."

"Be contented, Amy—thou canst not now have communication with thy father or his house. Were 30 it not a deep course of policy to commit no secret unnecessarily to the custody of more than must needs be, it were sufficient reason for secrecy, that yonder Cornish

man, yonder Trevanion, or Tressilian, or whatever his name is, haunts the old knight's house, and must necessarily know whatever is communicated there "

" My lord," answered the Countess, " I do not think it so My father has been long noted a worthy and honourable man . and for Tressilian, if we can pardon ourselves the ill we have wrought him, I will wager the coronet I am to share with you one day, that he is incapable of returning injury for injury "

19 " I will not trust him, however, Amy," said her husband ; " by my honour, I will not trust him—I would rather the foul fiend intermingle in our secret than this Tressilian ! "

" And why, my lord ? " said the Countess, though she shuddered slightly at the tone of determination in which he spoke ; " let me but know why you think thus hardly of Tressilian ? "

" Madam," replied the Earl, " my will ought to be a sufficient reason—If you desire more, consider how  
20 this Tressilian is leagued, and with whom He stands high in the opinion of this Radcliffe, this Sussex, against whom I am barely able to maintain my ground in the opinion of our suspicious mistress , and if he had me at such advantage, Amy, as to become acquainted with the tale of our marriage, before Elizabeth were fitly prepared, I were an outcast from her grace for ever—a bankrupt at once in favour and in fortune, perhaps, for she hath in her a touch of her father Henry,—a victim, and it may be a bloody one, to her offended and jealous resentment "

30 " But why, my lord," again urged his lady, " should you deem thus injuriously of a man, of whom you know so little ? What you do know of Tressilian is through me, and it is I who assure you that in no circumstances



LEICESTER PARTING FROM AMY.—Drawn by Ad. Lalauze.

will he betray your secret. If I did him wrong in your behalf, my lord, I am now the more concerned you should do him justice.—You are offended at my speaking of him, what would you say had I actually myself seen him ? ”

“ If you had,” replied the Earl, “ you would do well to keep that interview as secret as that which is spoken in a confessional. I seek no one’s ruin ; but he who thrusts himself on my secret privacy, were better look  
10 well to his future walk. The bear brooks no one to cross his awful path.”

“ Awful, indeed ! ” said the Countess, turning very pale.

“ You are ill, my love,” said the Earl, supporting her in his arms ; “ stretch yourself on your couch again ; it is but an early day for you to leave it.—Have you aught else, involving less than my fame, my fortune, and my life, to ask of me ? ”

“ Nothing, my lord and love,” answered the Countess, faintly ; “ something there was that I would have told  
20 you, but your anger has driven it from my recollection ”

“ Reserve it till our next meeting, my love,” said the Earl fondly, and again embracing her ; “ and barring only those requests which I cannot and dare not grant, thy wish must be more than England and all its dependencies can fulfil, if it is not gratified to the letter.”

Thus saying, he at length took farewell.

## CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN the message of the Queen was communicated to the Earl of Sussex, he at first smiled at the repulse which the physician had received from his zealous young

follower, but instantly recollecting himself, he commanded Blount, his master of the horse, instantly to take boat, and go down the river to the Palace of Greenwich, taking young Walter and Tracy with him, and make a suitable compliment, expressing his grateful thanks to his Sovereign, and mentioning the cause why he had not been enabled to profit by the assistance of the wise and learned Doctor Masters.

They were soon launched on the princely bosom of the broad Thames, upon which the sun now shone forth in all its splendour.

“By my honour,” said Blount, looking out from the head of the boat, “it seems to me as if our message were a sort of labour in vain, for see, the Queen’s barge lies at the stairs, as if her Majesty were about to take water”

It was even so. The royal barge, manned with the Queen’s watermen, richly attired in the regal liveries, and having the banner of England displayed, did indeed lie at the great stairs which ascended from the river. The yeomen of the guard, the tallest and most handsome men whom England could produce, guarded with their halberds the passage from the palace-gate to the river side, and all seemed in readiness for the Queen’s coming forth, although the day was yet so early.

Raleigh caused the boat to be pulled towards a landing-place and jumped on shore, followed, though with reluctance, by his cautious and timid companions. As they approached the gate of the palace, one of the sergeant porters told them they could not at present enter, as her Majesty was in the act of coming forth. The gentlemen used the name of the Earl of Sussex, but it proved no charm to subdue the officer, who alleged in



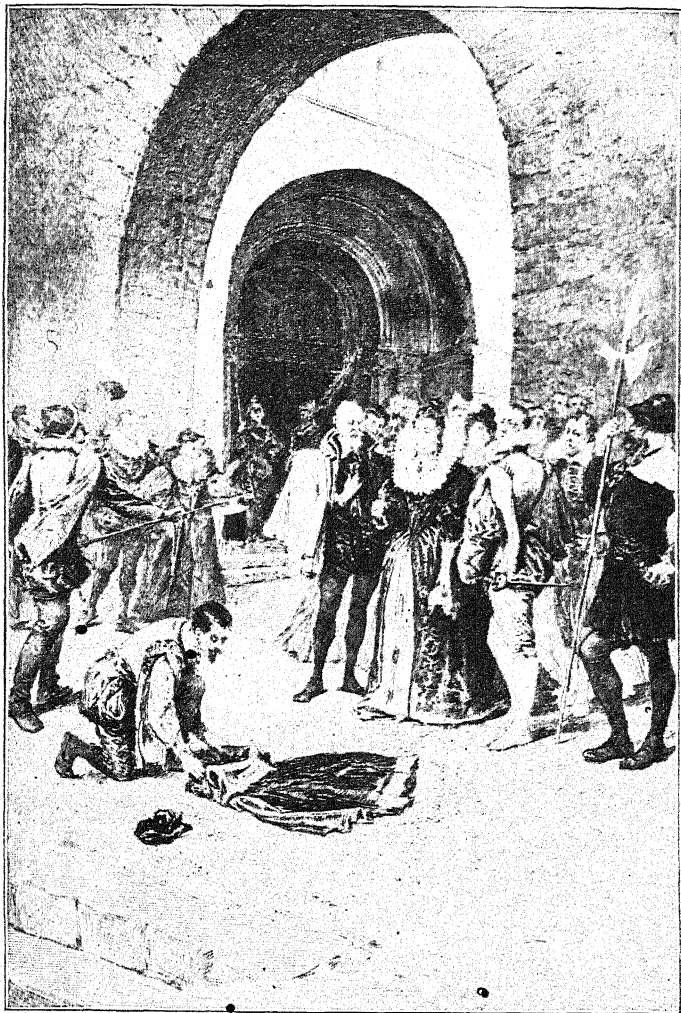
reply, that it was as much as his post was worth, to disobey in the least tittle the commands which he had received.

“Nav, I told you as much before,” said Blount; “do, I pray you, my dear Walter, let us take boat and return”

“Not till I see the Queen come forth,” returned the youth, composedly.

At this moment the gates opened, and ushers began to issue forth in array, preceded and flanked by the band of Gentlemen Pensioners. After this, amid a crowd of lords and ladies, yet so disposed around her that she could see and be seen on all sides, came Elizabeth herself, then in the prime of womanhood, and in the full glow of what in a Sovereign was called beauty.

The young cavalier we have so often mentioned had probably never yet approached so near the person of his Sovereign, and he pressed forward as far as the line of warders permitted, in order to avail himself of the present opportunity. His companion, on the contrary, cursing his imprudence, kept pulling him backwards, till Walter shook him off impatiently, and letting his rich cloak drop carelessly from one shoulder; a natural action, which served, however, to display to the best advantage his well-proportioned person. Unbonneting at the same time, he fixed his eager gaze on the Queen’s approach, with a mixture of respectful curiosity, and inodest yet ardent admiration, which suited so well with his fine features, that the warders, struck with his rich attire and noble countenance, suffered him to approach the ground over which the Queen was to pass, somewhat closer than was permitted to ordinary spectators. Thus the adventurous youth stood full in



RALEIGH AND THE QUEEN.—Drawn by Ad. Lalauze.

Elizabeth's eye,—an eye never indifferent to the admiration which she deservedly excited among her subjects, or to the fair proportions of external form which chanced to distinguish any of her courtiers. Accordingly, she fixed her keen glance on the youth, as she approached the place where he stood, with a look in which surprise at his boldness seemed to be unmingled with resentment, while a trifling accident happened which attracted her attention towards him yet more strongly. The night  
10 had been rainy, and just where the young gentleman stood, a small quantity of mud interrupted the Queen's passage. As she hesitated to pass on, the gallant, throwing his cloak from his shoulders, laid it on the miry spot, so as to ensure her stepping over it dry-shod. Elizabeth looked at the young man, who accompanied this act of devoted courtesy with a profound reverence, and a blush that overspread his whole countenance. The Queen was confused, and blushed in her turn, nodded her head, hastily passed on, and embarked in her barge  
20 without saying a word.

"Come along, Sir Coxcomb," said Blount; "your gay cloak will need the brush to-day, I wot."

"This cloak," said the youth, taking it up and folding it, "shall never be brushed while in my possession."

Their discourse was here interrupted by one of the band of Pensioners

"I was sent," said he, after looking at them attentively, "to a gentleman who hath no cloak, or a muddy one.—You, sir, I think," addressing the younger cavalier,

30 "are the man; you will please to follow me."

The young cavalier was guided to the water-side by the Pensioner, who showed him considerable respect, and ushered him into one of the wherries which lay

ready to attend the Queen's barge, which was already proceeding up the river, with the advantage of the flood-tide.

The two rowers used their oars with such expedition at the signal of the Gentleman Pensioner, that they very soon brought their little skiff under the stern of the Queen's boat, where she sate beneath an awning, attended by two or three ladies, and the nobles of her household. She looked more than once at the wherry in which the young adventurer was seated, spoke to those around her, 10 and seemed to laugh. At length one of the attendants, by the Queen's order apparently, made a sign for the wherry to come alongside, and the young man was desired to step from his own skiff into the Queen's barge, which he performed with graceful agility. The youth underwent the gaze of Majesty, not the less gracefully that his self-possession was mingled with embarrassment. The muddied cloak still hung upon his arm, and formed the natural topic with which the Queen introduced the conversation. 20

"You have this day spoiled a gay mantle in our behalf, young man. We thank you for your service, though the manner of offering it was unusual, and something bold."

"In a sovereign's need," answered the youth, "it is each liege-man's duty to be bold."

"God's pity! that was well said, my lord," said the Queen, turning to a grave person who sate by her, and answered with a grave inclination of the head, and something of a mumbled assent. "Well, young man, 30 your gallantry shall not go unrewarded. Go to the wardrobe keeper, and he shall have orders to supply the suit which you have cast away in our service. Thou

shalt have a suit, and that of the newest cut, I promise thee, on the word of a princess "

"May it please your Grace," said Walter, hesitating, "it is not for so humble a servant of your Majesty to measure out your bounties; but if it became me to choose"—

"Thou wouldst have gold, I warrant me," said the Queen, interrupting him, "fie, young man! I take shame to say, that, in our capital, such and so various  
10 are the means of thriftless folly, that to give gold to youth is giving fuel to fire, and furnishing them with the means of self-destruction. Yet thou mayst be poor," she added, "or thy parents may be—It shall be gold, if thou wilt, but thou shalt answer to me for the use on't."

Walter waited patiently until the Queen had done, and then modestly assured her, that gold was still less in his wish than the raiment her Majesty had before offered.

"How, boy!" said the Queen, "neither gold nor  
20 garment? What is it thou wouldst have of me, then?"

"Only permission, madam—if it is not asking too high an honour—permission to wear the cloak which did you this trifling service."

"Permission to wear thine own cloak, thou silly boy?" said the Queen.

"It is no longer mine," said Walter; "when your Majesty's foot touched it, it became a fit mantle for a prince, but far too rich a one for its former owner."

The Queen again blushed; and endeavoured to cover,  
30 by laughing, a slight degree of not displeasing surprise and confusion.

"Heard you ever the like, my lords? The youth's head is turned with reading romances—I must know

something of him, that I may send him safe to his friends.—What art thou ? ”

“ A gentleman of the household of the Earl of Sussex, so please your Grace, sent hither with his master of horse, upon a message to your Majesty.”

In a moment the gracious expression, which Elizabeth’s face had hitherto maintained, gave way to an expression of haughtiness and severity.

“ My Lord of Sussex,” she said, “ has taught us how to regard his messages, by the value he places upon 10 ours. We sent but this morning the physician in ordinary of our chamber, and that at no usual time, understanding his lordship’s illness to be more dangerous than we had before apprehended. When he demanded admittance in our name, it was stubbornly refused. For this slight of a kindness, which had but too much of condescension in it, we will receive, at present at least, no excuse ; and some such we suppose to have been the purport of my Lord of Sussex’s message.”

This was uttered in a tone, and with a gesture, which 20 made Lord Sussex’s friends who were within hearing tremble. He to whom the speech was addressed, however, trembled not ; but with great deference and humility, as soon as the Queen’s passion gave him an opportunity, he replied :—“ So please your most gracious Majesty, I was charged with no apology from the Earl of Sussex.”

“ With what were you then charged, sir ? ” said the Queen, with the impetuosity which, amid nobler qualities, strongly marked her character ; “ was it with a justifica- 30 tion ?—or, God’s death ! with a defiance ? ”

“ Madam,” said the young man, “ my Lord of Sussex knew the offence approached towards treason, and

could think of nothing save of securing the offender, and placing him in your Majesty's hands, and at your mercy. The noble Earl was fast asleep when your most gracious message reached him, a potion having been administered to that purpose by his physician; and his Lordship knew not of the ungracious repulse your Majesty's royal and most comfortable message had received, until after he awoke this morning "

"And which of his domestics, then, in the name of  
10 Heaven, presumed to reject my message, without even admitting my own physician to the presence of him whom I sent him to attend?" said the Queen, much surprised.

"The offender, madam, is before you," replied Walter, bowing very low; "the full and sole blame is mine."

"What! was it thou?—thou thyself, that repelled my messenger and my physician from Say's Court?" said the Queen. "What could occasion such boldness in one who seems devoted—that is, whose exterior  
20 bearing shows devotion—to his Sovereign?"

"Madam," said the youth,—who, notwithstanding an assumed appearance of severity, thought that he saw something in the Queen's face that resembled not implacability,—“we say in our country, that the physician is for the time the liege sovereign of his patient. Now, my noble master was then under dominion of a leech, by whose advice he hath greatly profited, who had issued his commands that his patient should not that night be disturbed, on the very peril of his life.”

30 “Thy master hath trusted some false varlet of an empiric,” said the Queen

“I know not, madam, but by the fact, that he is now—this very morning—awakened much refreshed and

strengthened, from the only sleep he has had for many hours."

The Queen answered hastily, and without affecting to disguise her satisfaction, "By my word, I am glad he is better. But thou wert over bold to deny the access of my Doctor Masters. Know'st thou not the Holy Writ saith, 'in the multitude of counsel there is safety?' Young man, what is thy name and birth?"

"Raleigh is my name, most gracious Queen, the youngest son of a large but honourable family of Devon-shire"

"Raleigh?" said Elizabeth, after a moment's recollection; "have we not heard of your service in Ireland?"

"I have been so fortunate as to do some service there, madam," replied Raleigh, "scarce, however, of consequence sufficient to reach your Grace's ears."

"They hear farther than you think of," said the Queen, graciously, "and have heard of a youth who defended a ford in Shannon against a whole band of 20 wild Irish rebels, until the stream ran purple with their blood and his own."

"Some blood I may have lost," said the youth, looking down, "but it was where my best is due; and that is in your Majesty's service."

The Queen paused, and then said hastily, "You are very young, to have fought so well, and to speak so well. But you must not escape your penance for turning back Masters—the poor man hath caught cold on the river; for our order reached him when he was just returned 30 from certain visits in London, and he held it matter of loyalty and conscience instantly to set forth again. So hark ye, Master Raleigh, see thou fail not to wear thy



muddy cloak, in token of penitence, till our pleasure be farther known. And here," she added, giving him a jewel of gold, in the form of a chess-man, "I give thee this to wear at the collar."

Raleigh, to whom nature had taught intuitively, as it were, those courtly arts which many scarce acquire from long experience, knelt, and, as he took from her hand the jewel, kissed the fingers which gave it.

## CHAPTER IX.

"I AM ordered to attend court to-morrow," said Leicester, 10 speaking to Varney, "to meet, as they surmise, my Lord of Sussex. The Queen intends to take up matters betwixt us. Have my retinue in order—see that their array be so splendid as to put down not only the rude companions of Ratcliffe, but the retainers of every other nobleman and courtier. Let them be well armed withal, but without any outward display of their weapons, wearing them as if more for fashion's sake than for use. Do thou thyself keep close to me, I may have business for you."

20 The preparations of Sussex and his party were not less anxious than those of Leicester.

"Thy Supplication, impeaching Varney of seduction," said the Earl to Tressilian, "is by this time in the Queen's hand—I have sent it through a sure channel. Methinks your suit should succeed, being, as it is, founded in justice and honour, and Elizabeth being the very muster of both. But, I wot not how—the gipsy" (so Sussex was wont to call his rival on account of his dark complexion) "hath much to say with her in these

holyday times of peace.—Well, we must be gay, since such is the fashion.”

While the rival statesmen were thus anxiously preparing for their approaching meeting in the Queen's presence, even Elizabeth herself was not without apprehension of what might chance from the collision of two such fiery spirits, each backed by a strong and numerous body of followers. The band of Gentlemen Pensioners were all under arms, and a reinforcement of the yeomen of the guard was brought down the 10 Thames from London.

The eventful hour, thus anxiously prepared for on all sides, at length approached, and, each followed by his long and glittering train of friends and followers, the rival Earls entered the Palace-yard of Greenwich at noon precisely.

The folding doors at the upper end of the long gallery were immediately afterwards opened, and it was announced in a whisper that the Queen was in her presence-chamber, to which these gave access. Both Earls moved 20 slowly and stately towards the entrance; Sussex followed by Tressilian, Blount, and Raleigh, and Leicester by Varney. The pride of Leicester was obliged to give way to court-forms, and with a grave and formal inclination of the head, he paused until his rival, a peer of older creation than his own, passed before him. Sussex returned the reverence with the same formal civility, and entered the presence-room, where the Queen, attired with even more than her usual splendour, and surrounded by those nobles and statesmen whose 30 courage and wisdom have rendered her reign immortal, stood ready to receive the homage of her subjects.

“My Lord of Leicester, and you, my Lord of Sussex,”

said the Queen, "I command you both to be friends with each other; or by the crown I wear, you shall find an enemy who will be too strong for both of you!"

"Madam," said the Earl of Leicester, "you who are yourself the fountain of honour, know best what is due to mine. I place it at your disposal, and only say, that the terms on which I have stood with my Lord of Sussex have not been of my seeking; nor had he cause to think me his enemy, until he had done me gross  
10 wrong."

"For me, madam," said the Earl of Sussex, "I cannot appeal from your sovereign pleasure; but I were well content my Lord of Leicester should say in what I have, as he terms it, wronged him, since my tongue never spoke the word that I would not willingly justify either on foot or horseback."

"And for me," said Leicester, "always under my gracious Sovereign's pleasure, my hand shall be as ready to make good my words, as that of any man who ever  
20 wrote himself Ratchliffe."

"My lords," said the Queen, "these are no terms for this presence; and if you cannot keep your temper, we will find means to keep both that and you close enough. Let me see you join hands, my lords, and forget your idle animosities."

The two rivals looked at each other with reluctant eyes, each unwilling to make the first advance to execute the Queen's will.

"Sussex," said Elizabeth, "I entreat—Leicester,  
30 I command you."

Yet, so were her words accented, that the entreaty sounded like command, and the command like entreaty. They remained still and stubborn, until she raised her

voice to a height which argued at once impatience and absolute command.

"Sir Henry Lee," she said, to an officer in attendance, "have a guard in present readiness, and man a barge instantly.—My Lords of Sussex and Leicester, I bid you once more to join hands—and, God's death! he that refuses shall taste of our Tower fare ere he see our face again. I will lower your proud hearts ere we part, and that I promise, on the word of a Queen!"

"The prison," said Leicester, "might be borne, but 10 to lose your Grace's presence, were to lose light and life at once.—Here, Sussex, is my hand."

"And here," said Sussex, "is mine in truth and honesty; but"——

"Nay, under favour, you shall add no more," said the Queen. "Why, this is as it should be," she added, looking on them more favourably, "and when you, the shepherds of the people, unite to protect them, it shall be well with the flock we rule over. For, my lords, I tell you plainly, your follies and your brawls lead to 20 strange disorders among your servants.—My Lord of Leicester, you have a gentleman in your household, called Varney?"

"Yes, gracious madam," replied Leicester, "I presented him to kiss your royal hand when you were last at Nonsuch"

"His outside was well enough," said the Queen, "but scarce so fair, I should have thought, as to have caused a maiden of honourable birth and hopes to barter her fame for his good looks, and become his paramour. Yet 30 so it is—this fellow of yours hath seduced the daughter of a good old Devonshire knight, Sir Hugh Robsart of Lildcote Hall, and she hath fled with him from her father's

house like a castaway.—My Lord of Leicester, are you ill, that you look so deadly pale ? ”

“ No, gracious madam,” said Leicester ; and it required every effort he could make to bring forth these few words.

“ You are surely ill, my lord ? ” said Elizabeth, going towards him with hasty speech and hurried step, which indicated the deepest concern. “ Call Masters—call our surgeon in ordinary—Where be these loitering fools ?—  
10 We lose the pride of our court through their negligence.—Or is it possible, Leicester,” she continued, looking on him with a very gentle aspect, “ can fear of my displeasure have wrought so deeply on thee ? Doubt not for a moment, noble Dudley, that we could blame *thee* for the folly of thy retainer—thee, whose thoughts we know to be far otherwise employed ! He that would climb the eagle’s nest, my lord, cares not who are catching linnets at the foot of the precipice.”

“ Mark you that ? ” said Sussex, aside to Raleigh.  
20 “ The devil aids him surely ! for all that would sink another ten fathom deep, seems but to make him float the more easily. Had a follower of mine acted thus ”——

“ Peace, my good lord,” said Raleigh, “ for God’s sake, peace ! Wait the change of the tide ; it is even now on the turn.”

The acute observation of Raleigh, perhaps, did not deceive him ; for Leicester’s confusion was so great, and, indeed, for the moment, so irresistibly overwhelming,  
30 that Elizabeth, after looking at him with a wondering eye, and receiving no intelligible answer to the unusual expressions of grace and affection which had escaped her, shot her quick glance around the circle of courtiers,

and reading, perhaps, in their faces, something that accorded with her own awakened suspicions, she said suddenly, "Or is there more in this than we see—or than you, my lord, wish that we should see. Call this Varney hither instantly—there is one Tressilian also mentioned in this petition—let them both come before us."

She was obeyed, and Tressilian and Varney appeared accordingly. Varney's first glance was at Leicester, his second at the Queen. In the looks of the latter there appeared an approaching storm, and in the downcast <sup>10</sup> countenance of his patron he could read no directions in which way he was to trim his vessel for the encounter—he then saw Tressilian, and at once perceived the peril of the situation in which he was placed. But Varney was as bold-faced and ready-witted as he was cunning and unscrupulous,—a skilful pilot in extremity, and fully conscious of the advantages which he could obtain, could he extricate Leicester from his present peril, and of the ruin that yawned for himself, should he fail in doing so.

20

"Is it true, sirrah," said the Queen, with one of those searching looks which few had the audacity to resist, "that you have seduced to infamy a young lady of birth and breeding, the daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall?"

Varney kneeled down, and replied, with a look of the most profound contrition, "There had been some love passages betwixt him and Mistress Amy Robsart."

Leicester's flesh quivered with indignation as he heard his dependent make this avowal, and for one moment he <sup>30</sup> manned himself to step forward, and, bidding farewell to the court and the royal favour, confess the whole mystery of the secret marriage. But he looked at

Sussex, and the idea of the triumphant smile which would clothe his cheek upon hearing the avowal, sealed his lips. "Not now, at least," he thought, "or in this presence, will I afford him so rich a triumph." And pressing his lips close together, he stood firm and collected, attentive to each word which Varney uttered, and determined to hide to the last the secret on which his court-favour seemed to depend. Meanwhile, the Queen proceeded in her examination of Varney.

- 10 "Love passages!" said she, echoing his last words; "what passages, thou knave? and why not ask the wench's hand from her father, if thou hadst any honesty in thy love for her?"

"An it please your Grace," said Varney, still on his knees, "I dared not do so, for her father had promised her hand to a gentleman of birth and honour—I will do him justice, though I know he bears me ill will—one Master Edmund Tressilian, whom I now see in the presence."

- 20 "Soh!" replied the Queen; "and what was your right to make the simple fool break her worthy father's contract, through your love *passages*, as your conceit and assurance terms them?"

"Madam," replied Varney, "it is in vain to plead the cause of human frailty before a judge to whom it is unknown, or that of love, to one who never yields to the passion"—He paused an instant, and then added, in a very low and timid tone, "which she inflicts upon all others."

- 30 Elizabeth tried to frown, but smiled in her own despite, as she answered, "Thou art a marvellously impudent knave—Art thou married to the girl?"

Leicester's feelings became so complicated and so

painfully intense, that it seemed to him as if his life was to depend on the answer made by Varney, who, after a moment's real hesitation, answered, "Yes."

"Thou false villain!" said Leicester, bursting forth into rage, yet unable to add another word to the sentence, which he had begun with such emphatic passion.

"Nay, my lord," said the Queen, "we will, by your leave, stand between this fellow and your anger. We have not yet done with him.—Knew your master, my Lord of Leicester, of this fair work of yours? Speak 10 truth, I command thee, and I will be thy warrant from danger on every quarter."

"Gracious madam," said Varney, "to speak Heaven's truth, my lord was the cause of the whole matter."

"Thou villain, wouldst thou betray me?" said Leicester.

"Speak on," said the Queen, hastily, her cheek colouring, and her eyes sparkling, as she addressed Varney; "speak on—here no commands are heard but mine." 20

"They are omnipotent, gracious madam," replied Varney, "and to you there can be no secrets.—Yet I would not," he added, looking around him, "speak of my master's concerns to other ears."

"Fall back, my lords," said the Queen to those who surrounded her, "and do you speak on.—What hath the Earl to do with this guilty intrigue of thine?—See, fellow, that thou behest him not!"

"Far be it from me to traduce my noble patron," replied Varney; "yet I am compelled to own that some 30 deep, overwhelming, yet secret feeling, hath of late dwelt in my lord's mind, hath abstracted him from the cares of the household, which he was wont to govern with



such religious strictness, and hath left us opportunities to do follies, of which the shame, as in this case, partly falls upon our patron. Without this, I had not had means or leisure to commit the folly which has drawn on me his displeasure; the heaviest to endure by me, which I could by any means incur,—saving always the yet more dreaded resentment of your Grace.”

“And in this sense, and no other, hath he been accessory to thy fault?” said Elizabeth.

10 “Surely, madam, in no other,” replied Varney; “but since somewhat hath chanced to him, he can scarce be called his own man. Look at him, madam, how pale and trembling he stands—how unlike his usual majesty of manner—yet what has he to fear from aught I can say to your Highness? Ah! madam, since he received that fatal packet!”

“What packet, and from whence?” said the Queen, eagerly.

20 “From whence, madam, I cannot guess; but I am so near to his person, that I know he has ever since worn, suspended around his neck, and next to his heart, that lock of hair which sustains a small golden jewel shaped like a heart—he speaks to it when alone—he parts not from it when he sleeps—no heathen ever worshipped an idol with such devotion.”

“Thou art a prying knave to watch thy master so closely,” said Elizabeth, blushing, but not with anger; “and a tattling knave to tell over again his fooleries.—

What colour might the braid of hair be that thou pratest  
30 of?”

Varney replied, “A poet, madam, might call it a thread from the golden web wrought by Minerva; but, to my thinking, it was paler than even the purest gold—

more like the last parting sunbeam of the softest day of spring."

"Why, you are a poet yourself, Master Varney," said the Queen, smiling; "but I have not genius quick enough to follow your rare metaphors—Look round these ladies—is there"—(she hesitated, and endeavoured to assume an air of great indifference)—"Is there here, in this presence, any lady, the colour of whose hair reminds thee of that braid? Methinks, without prying into my Lord of Leicester's amorous secrets, I would fain 10 know what kind of locks are like the thread of Minerva's web, or the—what was it?—the last rays of the May-day sun."

Varney looked round the presence-chamber, his eye travelling from one lady to another, until at length it rested upon the Queen herself, but with an aspect of the deepest veneration. "I see no tresses," he said, "in this presence, worthy of such similes, unless where I dare not look on them."

"How, sir knave," said the Queen, "dare you 20 intimate"—

"Nay, madam," replied Varney, shading his eyes with his hand, "it was the beams of the May-day sun that dazzled my weak eyes."

"Go to—go to," said the Queen; "thou art a foolish fellow,"—and turning quickly from him she walked up to Leicester.

Intense curiosity, mingled with all the various hopes, fears, and passions, which influence court-faction, had occupied the presence-chamber during the Queen's con- 30 ference with Varney, as if with the strength of an Eastern talisman. The atmosphere was contagious, and Leicester, who saw all around wishing or fearing his

advancement or his fall, forgot all that love had previously dictated, and saw nothing for the instant but the favour or disgrace, which depended on the nod of Elizabeth and the fidelity of Varney. He summoned himself hastily, and prepared to play his part in the scene which was like to ensue, when, as he judged from the glances which the Queen threw towards him, Varney's communications, be they what they might, were operating in his favour. Elizabeth did not long leave  
10 him in doubt ; for the more than favour with which she accosted him decided his triumph in the eyes of his rival, and of the assembled court of England—"Thou hast a prating servant of this same Varney, my lord," she said ; "it is lucky you trust him with nothing that can hurt you in our opinion, for, believe me, he would keep no counsel."

"From your Highness," said Leicester, dropping gracefully on one knee, "it were treason he should. I would that my heart itself lay before you, barer than the  
20 tongue of any servant could strip it"

"What, my lord," said Elizabeth, looking kindly upon him, "is there no one little corner over which you would wish to spread a veil ? Ah ! I see you are confused at the question, and your Queen knows she should not look too deeply into her servants' motives for their faithful duty, lest she see what might, or at least ought to, displease her."

Relieved by these last words, Leicester broke out into a torrent of expressions of deep and passionate attachment, which perhaps, at that moment, were not  
30 altogether fictitious. The mingled emotions which had at first overcome him had now given way to the energetic vigour with which he had determined to support his place

in the Queen's favour ; and never did he seem to Elizabeth more eloquent, more handsome, more interesting, than while, kneeling at her feet, he conjured her to strip him of all his dower, but to leave him the name of her servant.—“ Take from the poor Dudley,” he exclaimed, “ all that your bounty has made him, and bid him be the poor gentleman he was when your Grace first shone on him ; leave him no more than his cloak and his sword, but let him still boast he has—what in word or deed he never forfeited—the regard of his adored Queen and 10 mistress ! ”

“ No, Dudley ! ” said Elizabeth, raising him with one hand, while she extended the other that he might kiss it ; “ Elizabeth hath not forgotten that, whilst you were a poor gentleman, despoiled of your hereditary rank, she was as poor a princess, and that in her cause you then ventured all that oppression had left you—your life and honour.—Rise, my lord, and let my hand go !—rise, and be what you have ever been, the grace of our court, and the support of our throne. Your mistress may be forced 20 to chide your misdemeanours, but never without owning your merits.—And so help me God,” she added, turning to the audience, who, with various feelings, witnessed this interesting scene,—“ So help me God, gentlemen, as I think never sovereign had a truer servant than I have in this noble Earl ! ”

A murmur of assent rose from the Leicestrian faction, which the friends of Sussex dared not oppose. They remained with their eyes fixed on the ground, dismayed as well as mortified by the public and absolute triumph 30 of their opponents. Leicester's first use of the familiarity to which the Queen had so publicly restored him, was to ask her commands concerning Varney's offence.

"Although," he said, "the fellow deserves nothing from me but 'Displeasure, yet, might I presume to intercede"—"

"In truth, we had forgotten his matter," said the Queen; "and it was ill done of us, who owe justice to our meanest, as well as to our highest subject. We are pleased, my lord, that you were the first to recall the matter to our memory.—Where is Tressilian, the accuser?—let him come before us."

10 Tressilian appeared, and made a low and beseeeming reverence. His person, as we have elsewhere observed, had an air of grace and even of nobleness, which did not escape Queen Elizabeth's critical observation. She looked at him with attention as he stood before her unabashed, but with an air of the deepest dejection.

"I cannot but grieve for this gentleman," she said to Leicester. "I have enquired concerning him, and his presence confirms what I heard, that he is a scholar and a soldier, well accomplished both in arts and arms. - We  
20 women, my lord, are fanciful in our choice—I had said now, to judge by the eye, there was no comparison to be held betwixt your follower and this gentleman. But Varney is a well-spoken fellow, and, to speak truth, that goes far with us of the weaker sex.—Look you, Master Tressilian, a bolt lost is not a bow broken. Your true affection, as I will hold it to be, hath been, it seems, but ill requited. Forget, good sir, this Lady Light o' Love—teach your affection to see with a wiser eye."

As Tressilian kept the posture of one who would  
30 willingly be heard, though, at the same time, expressive of the deepest reverence, the Queen added with some impatience,—“What would the man have? The wench cannot wed both of you?—She has made her election—

not a wise one perchance—but she is Varney's wedded wife."

"My suit should sleep there, most gracious Sovereign," said Tressilian, "and with my suit my revenge. But I hold this Varney's word no good warrant for the truth."

"Had that doubt been elsewhere urged," answered Varney, "my sword"—

"*Thy* sword!" interrupted Tressilian, scornfully; "with her Grace's leave, my sword shall show"— 10

"Peace, you knaves, both!" said the Queen; "know you where you are?—This comes of your feuds, my lords," she added, looking towards Leicester and Sussex; "your followers catch your own humour, and must bandy and brawl in my court, and in my very presence, like so many Matamoros.—Look you, sirs, he that speaks of drawing swords in any other quarrel than mine or England's, by mine honour, I'll bracelet him with iron both on wrist and ankle!" She then paused a minute, and resumed in a milder tone, "I must do justice betwixt 20 the bold and mutinous knaves notwithstanding.—My Lord of Leicester, will you warrant with your honour,—that is, to the best of your belief,—that your servant speaks truth in saying he hath married this Amy Robsart."

This was a home-thrust, and had nearly staggered Leicester. But he had now gone too far to recede, and answered, after a moment's hesitation, "To the best of my belief—indeed on my certain knowledge—she is a wedded wife." 30

"Gracious madam," said Tressilian, "may I yet request to know, when and under what circumstances this alleged marriage"—

“Out, sirrah,” answered the Queen; “*alleged* marriage”—Have you not the word of this illustrious Earl to warrant the truth of what his servant says? But thou art a loser—think’st thyself such at least—and thou shalt have indulgence—we will look into the matter ourself more at leisure—My Lord of Leicester, I trust you remember we mean to taste the good cheer of your Castle of Kenilworth on this week ensuing—we will pray you to bid our good and valued friend the Earl of Sussex to hold company with us there.”

“If the noble Earl of Sussex,” said Leicester, bowing to his rival with the easiest and with the most graceful courtesy, “will so far honour my poor house, I will hold it an additional proof of the amicable regard it is your Grace’s desire we should entertain towards each other.”

Sussex was more embarrassed.—“I should,” said he, “madam, be but a clog on your gayer hours, since my late severe illness.”

20 “And have you been indeed so very ill?” said Elizabeth, looking on him with more attention than before; “you are in faith strangely altered, and deeply am I grieved to see it. But be of good cheer—we will ourselves look after the health of so valued a servant, and to whom we owe so much. Masters shall order your diet; and that we ourselves may see that he is obeyed, you must attend us in this progress to Kenilworth. My Lords of Sussex and Leicester, we have a word more with you. Tressilian and Varney are near your persons

30 —you will see that they attend you at Kenilworth.—And as we shall then have both Paris and Menelaus within our call, so we will have the same fair Helen also, whose fickleness has caused this broil.—Varney, thy wife

must be at Kenilworth, and forthcoming at my order.—  
My Lord of Leicester, we expect you will look to this.”

## CHAPTER X.

DURING the brief interval that took place betwixt the dismissal of the audience and the sitting of the privy-council, Leicester had time to reflect that he had that morning sealed his own fate. “It was impossible for him now,” he thought, “after having, in the face of all that was honourable in England, pledged his truth (though in an ambiguous phrase) for the statement of Varney, to contradict or disavow it, without exposing 10 himself not merely to the loss of court-favour, but to the highest displeasure of the Queen, his deceived mistress, and to the scorn and contempt at once of his rival and of all his compeers.”

Never was more anxious and ready way made for “my Lord of Leicester,” than as he passed through the crowded anterooms to go towards the river-side, in order to attend her Majesty to her barge—never was the voice of the ushers louder, to “make room—make room for the noble Earl,”—never were these signals more promptly 20 and reverently obeyed.

On the other hand, never did Leicester return the general greeting with such ready and condescending courtesy, or endeavour more successfully to gather “golden opinions from all sorts of men.”

The Queen’s barge was on the very point of putting off; the seat allotted to Leicester in the stern, and that to his master of the horse on the bow of the boat, being already filled up. But on Leicester’s approach, there



was a pause, as if the bargemen anticipated some alteration in their company. The angry spot was, however, on the Queen's cheek, as, in that cold tone with which superiors endeavour to veil their internal agitation, while speaking to those before whom it would be derogation to express it, she pronounced the chilling words—"We have waited, my Lord of Leicester."

"Madam, and most gracious Princess," said Leicester, "you, who can pardon so many weaknesses which your  
10 own heart never knows, can best bestow your commiseration on the agitations of the bosom, which, for a moment, affect both head and limbs. I came to your presence, a doubting and an accused subject; your goodness penetrated the clouds of defamation, and restored me to my honour, and, what is yet dearer, to your favour—is it wonderful, though for me it is most unhappy, that my master of the horse should have found me in a state which scarce permitted me to make the exertion necessary to follow him to this place, when one  
20 glance of your Highness, although, alas! an angry one, has had power to do that for me, in which Esculapius might have failed?"

"How is this?" said Elizabeth hastily, looking at Varney; "hath your lord been ill?"

"Something of a fainting fit," answered the ready-witted Varney, "as your Grace may observe from his present condition. My lord's haste would not permit me leisure even to bring his dress into order."

"It matters not," said Elizabeth, as she gazed on the  
30 noble face and form of Leicester. "Make room for my noble lord.—Your place, Master Varney, has been filled up; you must find a seat in another barge."

Varney bowed, and withdrew.

When the boat put off from the shore—when the music sounded from a barge which accompanied them—when the shouts of the populace were heard from the shore, and all reminded Leicester of the situation in which he was placed, he abstracted his thoughts and feelings by a strong effort from every thing but the necessity of maintaining himself in the favour of his patroness, and exerted his talents of pleasing captivation with such success, that the Queen, alternately delighted with his conversation, and alarmed for his health, at length imposed a temporary silence on him, with playful yet anxious care, lest his flow of spirits should exhaust him.

“My lords,” she said, “having passed for a time our edict of silence upon our good Leicester, we will call you to counsel on a gamesome matter, more fitted to be now treated of, amidst mirth and music, than in the gravity of our ordinary deliberations.—Which of you, my lords,” said she, smiling, “know aught of a petition from Orson Pinnit, the keeper, as he qualifies himself, of our royal 20 bears? Who stands godfather to his request?”

“Marry, with your Grace’s good permission, that do I,” said the Earl of Sussex.—“Orson Pinnit was a stout soldier before he was so mangled by the skenes of the Irish clan MacDonough, and I trust your Grace will be, as you always have been, good mistress to your good and trusty servants.”

“Surely,” said the Queen, “it is our purpose to be so, and in especial to our poor soldiers and sailors, who hazard their lives for little pay. We would give,” she 30 said, with her eyes sparkling, “yonder royal palace of ours to be an hospital for their use, rather than they should call their mistress ungrateful.—But this is not

the question," she said, her voice, which had been awakened by her patriotic feelings, once more subsiding into the tone of gay and easy conversation ; " for this Orson Pinnit's request goes something farther. He complains, that amidst the extreme delight with which men haunt the play-houses, and in especial their eager desire for seeing the exhibitions of one Will Shakspeare, (whom, I think, my lords, we have all heard something of,) the manly amusement of bear-baiting is falling into  
10 comparative neglect ; since men will rather throng to see these roguish players kill each other in jest, than to see our royal dogs and bears worry each other in bloody earnest.—What say you to this, my Lord of Sussex ? "

" Why, truly, gracious madam," said Sussex, " you must expect little from an old soldier like me in favour of battles in sport, when they are compared with battles in earnest ; and yet, by my faith, I wish Will Shakspeare no harm. He is a stout man at quarter-staff, and single falchion, though, as I am told, a halting fellow ; and he  
20 stood, they say, a tough fight with the rangers of old Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecot, when he broke his deer-park and kissed his keeper's daughter."

" I cry you mercy, my Lord of Sussex," said Queen Elizabeth, interrupting him ; " that matter was heard in council, and we will not have this fellow's offence exaggerated—there was no kissing in the matter, and the defendant hath put the denial on record.—But what say you to his present practice, my lord, on the stage ? "

" Why, truly, madam," replied Sussex, " as I said  
30 before, I wish the gamesome mad fellow no injury. Some of his poetry has rung in mine ears as if the lines sounded to boot and saddle.—But then it is all froth and folly—no substance or seriousness in it, as your Grace

has already well touched.—What are half a dozen knaves, with rusty foils and tattered targets, making but a mere mockery of a stout fight, to compare to the royal game of bear-baiting, which hath been graced by your Highness's countenance, and that of your royal predecessors, in this your princely kingdom, famous for matchless mastiffs, and bold bearwards, over all Christendom? Greatly is it to be doubted that the race of both will decay, if men should throng to hear the lungs of an idle player belch forth nonsensical bombast, instead of 10 bestowing their pence in encouraging the bravest image of war that can be shown in peace, and that is the sports of the Bear-garden. There you may see the bear lying at guard with his red pinky eyes, watching the onset of the mastiff, like a wily captain, who maintains his defence that an assailant may be tempted to venture within his danger. And then comes Sir Mastiff, like a worthy champion, in full career at the throat of his adversary—and then shall Sir Bruin teach him the reward for those who, in their over-courage, neglect the 20 policies of war, and, catching him in his arms, strain him to his breast like a lusty wrestler, until rib after rib crack like the shot of a pistolet. And then another mastiff, as bold, but with better aim and sounder judgment, catches Sir Bruin by the nether lip, and hangs fast, while he tosses about his blood and slaver, and tries in vain to shake Sir Talbot from his hold. And then ”——

“Nay, by my honour, my lord,” said the Queen, laughing, “you have described the whole so admirably, that, had we never seen a bear-baiting, as we have 30 beheld many, and hope, with heaven's allowance, to see many more, your words were sufficient to put the whole

Bear-garden before our eyes.—But come, who speaks next in this case?—My Lord of Leicester, what say you ? ”

“ Am I then to consider myself as unmuzzled, please your Grace ? ” replied Leicester.

“ Surely, my lord—that is, if you feel hearty enough to take part in our game,” answered Elizabeth , “ and yet, when I think of your cognizance of the bear and ragged staff, methinks we had better hear some less  
10 partial orator.”

“ Nay, on my word, gracious Princess,” said the Earl, “ though my brother Ambrose of Warwick and I do carry the ancient cognizance your Highness deigns to remember, I nevertheless desire nothing but fair play on all sides ; or, as they say, ‘ fight dog, fight bear.’ And in behalf of the players, I must needs say that they are witty knaves, whose rants and jests keep the minds of the commons from busying themselves with state affairs, and listening to traitorous speeches, idle rumours, and  
20 disloyal insinuations. When men are agape to see how Marlow, Shakspeare, and other play artificers work out their fanciful plots, as they call them, the mind of the spectators is withdrawn from the conduct of their rulers.”

“ We would not have the mind of our subjects withdrawn from the consideration of our own conduct, my lord,” answered Elizabeth ; “ because the more closely it is examined, the true motives by which we are guided will appear the more manifest.”

“ I have heard, however, madam,” said the Dean of  
30 St. Asaph’s, an eminent Puritan, “ that these players are wont, in their plays, not only to introduce profane and lewd expressions, but even to bellow out such reflections on government, its origin and its object, as

tend to render the subject discontented, and shake the solid foundations of civil society. And it seems to be, under your Grace's favour, far less than safe to permit these naughty foul-mouthed knaves to ridicule the godly for their decent gravity, and in blaspheming heaven, and slandering its earthly rulers, to set at defiance the laws both of God and man."

"If we could think this were true, my lord," said Elizabeth, "we should give sharp correction for such offences. But it is ill arguing against the use of any 10 thing from its abuse. And touching this Shakspeare, we think there is that in his plays that is worth twenty Bear-gardens; and that this new undertaking of his Chronicles, as he calls them, may entertain, with honest mirth, mingled with useful instruction, not only our subjects, but even the generation which may succeed to us."

"Your Majesty's reign will need no such feeble aid to make it remembered to the latest posterity," said Leicester. "And yet, in his way, Shakspeare hath so 20 touched some incidents of your Majesty's happy government, as may countervail what has been spoken by his reverence the Dean of St. Asaph's. There are some lines, for example—I would my nephew, Philip Sidney, were here, they are scarce ever out of his mouth—they are spoken in a mad tale of fairies, love-charms, and I wot not what besides; but beautiful they are, however short they may and must fall of the subject to which they bear a bold relation—and Philip murmurs them, I think, even in his dreams."

30

"You tantalize us, my lord," said the Queen.—  
"Master Philip Sidney is, we know, a minion of the Muses, and we are pleased it should be so. Valour never

shines to more advantage than when united with the true taste and love of letters. But surely there are some others among our young courtiers who can recollect what your lordship has forgotten amid weightier affairs.—Master Tressilian, you are described to me as a worshipper of Minerva—remember you ought of these lines ? ”

Tressilian's heart was too heavy, his prospects in life too fatally blighted, to profit by the opportunity which  
 10 the Queen thus offered to him of attracting her attention, but he determined to transfer the advantage to his more ambitious young friend ; and, excusing himself on the score of want of recollection, he added, that he believed the beautiful verses, of which my Lord of Leicester had spoken, were in the remembrance of Master Walter Raleigh.

At the command of the Queen, that cavalier repeated, with accent and manner which even added to their exquisite delicacy of tact and beauty of description, the  
 20 celebrated vision of Oberon :

“That very time I saw, (but thou couldst not,)  
 Flying between the cold moon and the earth,  
 Cupid, all arm'd : a certain aim he took  
 At a fair vestal, throned by the west ;  
 And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,  
 As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts :  
 But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft  
 Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon ;  
 And the imperial votress passed on,  
 30 In maiden meditation, fancy free.”

The voice of Raleigh, as he repeated the last lines, became a little tremulous, as if diffident how the Sovereign to whom the homage was addressed might receive it, exquisite as it was. If this diffidence was

affected, it was good policy ; but if real, there was little occasion for it. The verses were not probably new to the Queen, for when was ever such elegant flattery long in reaching the royal ear to which it was addressed ? But they were not the less welcome when repeated by such a speaker as Raleigh. Alike delighted with the matter, the manner, the graceful form and animated countenance of the gallant young reciter, Elizabeth kept time to every cadence, with look and with finger. When the speaker had ceased, she murmured over the last lines 10 as if scarce conscious that she was overheard, and as she uttered the words,

“In maiden meditation, fancy free,”

she dropt into the Thames the supplication of Orson Pinnit, keeper of the royal bears, to find more favourable acceptance at Sheerness, or wherever the tide might waft it.

Leicester was spurred to emulation by the success of the young courtier's exhibition, as the veteran racer is roused when a high-mettled colt passes him on the way. 20 He turned the discourse on shows, banquets, pageants, and on the character of those by whom these gay scenes were then frequented. He mixed acute observation with light satire, in that just proportion which was free alike from malignant slander and insipid praise. He mimicked with ready accent the manners of the affected or the clownish, and made his own graceful tone and manner seem doubly such when he resumed it. Foreign countries—their customs—their manners—the rules of their courts—the fashions, and even the dress of their 30 ladies, were equally his theme ; and seldom did he conclude without conveying some compliment, always



couched in delicacy, and expressed with propriety, to the Virgin Queen, her court and her government.

When they returned to the palace, Elizabeth accepted, or rather selected, the arm of Leicester, to support her, from the stairs where they landed, to the great gate. It even seemed to him, (though that might arise from the flattery of his own imagination,) that during this short passage she leaned on him somewhat more than the slippiness of the way necessarily demanded. Certainly her actions and words combined to express a degree of favour, which, even in his proudest days, he had not till then attained.

He enjoyed his triumph as one to whom court favour had been both the primary and the ultimate motive of life, while he forgot, in the intoxication of the moment, the perplexities and dangers of his own situation. Indeed, strange as it may appear, he thought less at that moment of the perils arising from his secret union, than of the marks of grace which Elizabeth from time to time showed to young Raleigh. They were indeed transient, but they were conferred on one accomplished in mind and body, with grace, gallantry, literature, and valour. An accident occurred in the course of the evening which riveted Leicester's attention to this object.

The nobles and courtiers who had attended the Queen on her pleasure expedition, were invited, with royal hospitality, to a splendid banquet in the hall of the palace. After a moderate interval, the court again met in the splendid gardens of the palace; and it was while thus engaged, that the Queen suddenly asked a lady, who was near to her both in place and favour, what had become of the young Squire Lack-Cloak.

The Lady Paget answered, "she had seen, Master Raleigh but two or three minutes since, standing at the window of a small pavilion or pleasure house, which looked out on the Thames, and writing on the glass with a diamond ring"

"That ring," said the Queen, "was a small token I gave him, to make amends for his spoiled mantle. Come, Paget, let us see what use he has made of it."

They went to the spot, within sight of which, but at some distance, the young cavalier still lingered, as the 10 fowler watches the net which he has set. The Queen approached the window, on which Raleigh had used her gift to inscribe the following line :—

Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall.

The Queen smiled, read it twice over, once with deliberation to Lady Paget, and once again to herself. "It is a pretty beginning," said she, after the consideration of a moment or two; "but methinks the muse hath deserted the young wit, at the very outset of his task. It were good-natured—were it not, Lady 20 Paget—to complete it for him? Try your rhyming faculties."

Lady Paget, prosaic from her cradle upwards, as ever any lady of the bedchamber before or after her, disclaimed all possibility of assisting the young poet.

"Nay, then, we must sacrifice to the Muses ourselves," said Elizabeth.

"The incense of no one can be more acceptable," said Lady Paget; "and your Highness will impose such obligations on the ladies of Parnassus"— 30

"Hush, Paget," said the Queen, "you speak sacrilege against the immortal Nine—yet, virgins themselves,

they should be exorable to a Virgin Queen—and therefore—let me see how runs his verse—

Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall

Might not the answer (for fault of a better) run thus ?—

If thy mind fail thee, do not climb at all ”

The dame of honour uttered an exclamation of joy and surprise at so happy a termination ; and certainly a worse has been applauded, even when coming from a less distinguished author.

10 The Queen, thus encouraged, took off a diamond ring, and saying, “ We will give this gallant some cause of marvel, when he finds his couplet perfected without his own interference,” she wrote her own line beneath that of Raleigh.

The Queen left the pavilion—but retiring slowly, and often looking back, she could see the young cavalier steal, with the flight of a lapwing, towards the place where he had seen her make a pause ;—“ She staid but to observe,” as she said, “ that her train had taken ; ”  
20 and then, laughing at the circumstance with the Lady Paget, she took the way slowly towards the palace. Elizabeth, as they returned, cautioned her companion not to mention to any one the aid which she had given to the young poet—and Lady Paget promised scrupulous secrecy. It is to be supposed that she made a mental reservation in favour of Leicester, to whom her ladyship transmitted without delay an anecdote so little calculated to give him pleasure.

Raleigh, in the meanwhile, stole back to the window,  
30 and read, with a feeling of intoxication, the encouragement thus given him by the Queen in person to follow out his ambitious career, and returned to Sussex and his

retinue, then on the point of embarking to go up the river, his heart beating high with gratified pride, and with hope of future distinction.

## CHAPTER XI.

It was the twilight of a summer night, (9th July, 1575,) the sun having for some time set, and all were in anxious expectation of the Queen's immediate approach. The multitude had remained assembled for many hours, and their numbers were still rather on the increase. A profuse distribution of refreshments, together with roasted oxen, and barrels of ale set a-broach in different 10 places of the road, had kept the populace in perfect love and loyalty towards the Queen and her favourite, which might have somewhat abated, had fasting been added to watching. They passed away the time, therefore, with the usual popular amusements of whooping, hallooing, shrieking, and playing rude tricks upon each other, forming the chorus of discordant sounds usual on such occasions. These prevailed all through the crowded roads and fields, and especially beyond the gate of the Chase, where the greater number of the common sort 20 were stationed; when, all of a sudden, a single rocket was seen to shoot into the atmosphere, and, at the instant, far heard over flood and field, the great bell of the Castle tolled.

Immediately there was a pause of dead silence, succeeded by a deep hum of expectation, the united voice of many thousands, none of whom spoke above their breath. This was followed by a shout of applause from the multitude, so tremendously vociferous, that

the country echoed for miles round. The guards, thickly stationed upon the road by which the Queen was to advance, caught up the acclamation, which ran like wildfire to the Castle. and announced to all within, that Queen Elizabeth had entered the Royal Chase of Kenilworth. The whole music of the Castle sounded at once, and a round of artillery, with a salvo of small arms, was discharged from the battlements ; but the noise of drums and trumpets, and even of the cannon themselves, was  
10 but faintly heard amidst the roaring and reiterated welcomes of the multitude.

As the noise began to abate, a broad glare of light was seen to appear from the gate of the Park, and, broadening and brightening as it came nearer, advanced along the open and fair avenue that led towards the Gallery-tower. The word was passed along, "The Queen ! The Queen ! Silence, and stand fast !" Onward came the cavalcade, illuminated by two hundred thick waxen torches, in the hands of as many horsemen, which cast  
20 a light like that of broad day all around-the procession, but especially on the principal group, of which the Queen herself, arrayed in the most splendid manner, and blazing with jewels, formed the central figure. She was mounted on a milk-white horse, which she reined with peculiar grace and dignity ; and in the whole of her stately and noble carriage, you saw the daughter of an hundred kings.

The ladies of the court, who rode beside her Majesty, had taken especial care that their own external  
30 appearance should not be more glorious than their rank and the occasion altogether demanded, so that no inferior luminary might appear to approach the orbit of royalty. But their personal charms, and the magnifi-

cence by which, under every prudential restraint, they were necessarily distinguished, exhibited them as the very flower of a realm so far famed for splendour and beauty. The magnificence of the courtiers, free from such restraints as prudence imposed on the ladies, was yet more unbounded.

Leicester, who glittered like a golden image with jewels and cloth of gold, rode on her Majesty's right hand, as well in quality of her host, as of her Master of the Horse. The black steed which he mounted had not 10 a single white hair on his body, and was one of the most renowned chargers in Europe, having been purchased by the Earl at large expense for this royal occasion. As the noble animal chafed at the slow pace of the procession, and, arching his stately neck, champed on the silver bits which restrained him, the foam flew from his mouth, and specked his well-formed limbs as if with spots of snow. The rider well became the high place which he held, and the proud steed which he bestrode; for no man in England, or perhaps in Europe, was more perfect than 20 Dudley in horsemanship, and all other exercises belonging to his quality. He was bareheaded, as were all the courtiers in the train; and the red torchlight shone upon his long curled tresses of dark hair, and on his noble features, to the beauty of which even the severest criticism could only object the lordly fault, as it may be termed, of a forehead somewhat too high. On that proud evening, those features wore all the grateful solicitude of a subject, to show himself sensible of the high honour which the Queen was conferring on him, 30 and all the pride and satisfaction which became so glorious a moment. Yet, though neither eye nor feature betrayed aught but feelings which suited the

occasion, some of the Earl's personal attendants remarked that he was unusually pale, and they expressed to each other their fear that he was taking more fatigue than consisted with his health

Varney followed close behind his master, as the principal esquire in waiting, and had charge of his lordship's black velvet bonnet, garnished with a clasp of diamonds, and surmounted by a white plume. He kept his eye constantly on his master ; and, for reasons  
10 with which the reader is not unacquainted, was, among Leicester's numerous dependants, the one who was most anxious that his lord's strength and resolution should carry him successfully through a day so agitating. For although Varney was one of the few—the very few moral monsters, who contrive to lull to sleep the remorse of their own bosoms, and are drugged into moral insensibility by atheism, as men in extreme agony are lulled by opium, yet he knew that in the breast of his patron there was already awakened the fire that is never quenched,  
20 and that his lord felt, amid all the pomp and magnificence we have described, the gnawing of the worm that dieth not. Still, however, assured as Lord Leicester stood, by Varney's own intelligence, that his Countess laboured under an indisposition which formed an unanswerable apology to the Queen for her not appearing at Kenilworth, there was little danger, his wily retainer thought, that a man so ambitious would betray himself by giving way to any external weakness.

Amidst bursts of music, which, as if the work of  
30 enchantment, seemed now close at hand, now softened by distant space, now wailing so low and sweet as if that distance were gradually prolonged until only the last lingering strains could reach the ear, Queen Elizabeth

crossed the Gallery-tower, and came upon the long bridge, which extended from thence to Mortimer's Tower.

The Queen had no sooner stepped on the bridge than a new spectacle was provided ; for as soon as the music gave signal that she was so far advanced, a raft, so disposed as to resemble a small floating island, illuminated by a great variety of torches, and surrounded by floating pageants formed to represent sea-horses, on which sat Tritons, Nereids, and other fabulous deities 10 of the seas and rivers, made its appearance upon the lake, and, issuing from behind a small heronry where it had been concealed, floated gently towards the farther end of the bridge.

On the islet appeared a beautiful woman, clad in a watchet-coloured silken mantle, bound with a broad girdle, inscribed with characters like the phylacteries of the Hebrews. Her feet and arms were bare, but her wrists and ankles were adorned with gold bracelets of uncommon size. Amidst her long silky black hair, she 20 wore a crown or chaplet of artificial mistletoe, and bore in her hand a rod of ebony tipped with silver. Two nymphs attended on her, dressed in the same antique and mystical guise.

The pageant was so well managed, that this Lady of the Floating Island, having performed her voyage with much picturesque effect, landed at Mortimer's Tower with her two attendants, just as Elizabeth presented herself before that outwork. The stranger then, in a well-penned speech, announced herself as that famous 30 Lady of the Lake, renowned in the stories of King Arthur, who had nursed the youth of the redoubted Sir Lancelot, and whose beauty had proved too powerful



both for the wisdom and the spells of the mighty Merlin. Since that early period she had remained possessed of her crystal dominions, she said, despite the various men of fame and might by whom Kenilworth had been successively tenanted The Saxons, the Danes, the Normans, the Saintlowes, the Clintons, the Mountforts, the Mortimers, the Plantagenets, great though they were in arms and magnificence, had never, she said, caused her to raise her head from the waters which hid her  
10 crystal palace. But a greater than all these great names had now appeared, and she came in homage and duty to welcome the peerless Elizabeth to all sport, which the Castle and its environs, which lake or land, could afford.

## CHAPTER XII.

It is by no means our purpose to detail minutely all the princely festivities of Kenilworth. It is sufficient to say, that under discharge of splendid fireworks, the Queen entered the base-court of Kenilworth, through Mortimer's Tower, and moving on through pageants of  
20 heathen gods and heroes of antiquity, who offered gifts and compliments on the bended knee, at length found her way to the great hall of the Castle, gorgeously hung for her reception with the richest silken tapestry, misty with perfumes, and sounding to strains of soft and delicious music. From the highly carved oaken roof hung a superb chandelier of gilt bronze, formed like a spread eagle, whose outstretched wings supported three male and three female figures, grasping a pair of branches in each hand. The hall was thus illuminated by twenty-

four torches of wax. At the upper end of the splendid apartment was a state canopy, overshadowing a royal throne, and beside it was a door, which opened to a long suite of apartments, decorated with the utmost magnificence for the Queen and her ladies, whenever it should be her pleasure to be private.

The Earl of Leicester having handed the Queen up to her throne, and seated her there, knelt down before her, and kissing the hand which she held out, with an air in which romantic and respectful gallantry was happily 10 mingled with the air of loyal devotion, he thanked her, in terms of the deepest gratitude, for the highest honour which a sovereign could render to a subject. So handsome did he look when kneeling before her, that Elizabeth was tempted to prolong the scene a little longer than there was, strictly speaking, necessity for; and ere she raised him, she passed her hand over his head, so near, as almost to touch his long curled and perfumed hair, and with a movement of fondness, that seemed to intimate she would, if she dared, have made the motion 20 a slight caress.

She at length raised him, and, standing beside the throne, he explained to her the various preparations which had been made for her amusement and accommodation, all of which received her prompt and gracious approbation. The Earl then prayed her Majesty for permission, that he himself, and the nobles who had been in attendance upon her during the journey, might retire for a few minutes, and put themselves into a guise 30 more fitting for dutiful attendance.

He presently re-entered the Castle-hall apparelled all in white, his shoes being of white velvet; his understocks (or stockings) of knit silk; his upper stocks of

white velvet, lined with cloth of silver, which was shown at the slashed part of the middle thigh ; his doublet of cloth of silver, the close jerkin of white velvet, embroidered with silver and seed-pearl, his girdle and the scabbard of his sword of white velvet with golden buckles ; his poniard and sword hilted and mounted with gold ; and over all, a rich loose robe of white satin, with a border of golden embroidery a foot in breadth. The collar of the Garter, and the azure Garter itself  
10 around his knee, completed the appointments of the Earl of Leicester ; which were so well matched by his fair stature, graceful gesture, fine proportion of body, and handsome countenance, that at the moment he was admitted by all who saw him, as the goodliest person whom they had ever looked upon. Sussex and the other nobles were also richly attired, but, in point of splendour and gracefulness of mien, Leicester far exceeded them all.

Elizabeth received him with great complacency  
20 “ We have one piece of royal justice,” she said, “ to attend to. It is a piece of justice, too, which interests us as a woman, as well as in the character of mother and guardian of the English people.”

An involuntary shudder came over Leicester, as he bowed low, expressive of his readiness to receive her royal commands ; and a similar cold fit came over Varney, whose eyes (seldom during that evening removed from his patron) instantly perceived, from the change in his looks, slight as that was, of what the Queen was  
30 speaking. But Leicester had wrought his resolution up to the point which, in his crooked policy, he judged necessary ; and when Elizabeth added—“ It is of the matter of Varney and Tressilian we speak—is the lady

in presence, my lord?" His answer was ready:—"Gracious madam, she is not."

Elizabeth bent her brows and compressed her lips. "Our orders were strict and positive, my lord," was her answer—

"And should have been obeyed, good my liege," replied Leicester, "had they been expressed in the form of the lightest wish. But—Varney, step forward—this gentleman will inform your Grace of the cause why the lady" (he could not force his rebellious tongue to utter the words—*his wife*) "cannot attend on your royal presence."

Varney advanced, and pleaded with readiness, what indeed he firmly believed, the absolute incapacity of the party (for neither did he dare, in Leicester's presence, term her his wife) to wait on her Grace.

"Here," said he, "are attestations from a most learned physician, whose skill and honour are well known to my good Lord of Leicester; and from an honest and devout Protestant, a man of credit and substance, one Anthony Foster, the gentleman in whose house she is at present bestowed, that she now labours under an illness which altogether unfits her for such a journey as betwixt this Castle and the neighbourhood of Oxford"

"This alters the matter," said the Queen, taking the certificates in her hand, and glancing at their contents—"Let Tressilian come forward.—Master Tressilian, we have much sympathy for your situation, the rather that you seem to have set your heart deeply on this Amy Robsart, or Varney. Our power, thanks to God, and the willing obedience of a loving people, is worth much, but there are some things which it cannot compass. We

cannot, for example, command the affections of a giddy young girl, or make her love sense and learning better than a courtier's fine doublet; and we cannot control sickness, with which it seems this lady is afflicted, who may not, by reason of such infirmity, attend our court here, as we had required her to do. Here are the testimonials of the physician who hath her under his charge, and the gentleman in whose house she resides, so setting forth."

10 "Under your Majesty's favour," said Tressilian hastily, and, in his alarm for the consequence of the imposition practised on the Queen, forgetting, in part at least, his own promise to Amy, "these certificates speak not the truth."

"How, sir!" said the Queen,—“Impeach my Lord of Leicester's veracity! But you shall have a fair hearing. In our presence the meanest of our subjects shall be heard against the proudest, and the least known against the most favoured; therefore you shall be heard  
20 fairly, but beware you speak not without a warrant! Take these certificates in your own hand; look at them carefully, and say manfully if you impugn the truth of them, and upon what evidence.”

As the Queen spoke, his promise and all its consequences rushed on the mind of the unfortunate Tressilian, and while it controlled his natural inclination to pronounce that a falsehood which he knew from the evidence of his senses to be untrue, gave an indecision and irresolution to his appearance and utterance, which  
30 made strongly against him in the mind of Elizabeth, as well as of all who beheld him. He turned the papers over and over, as if he had been an idiot, incapable of comprehending their contents. The Queen's impatience

began to become visible.—“ You are a scholar, sir,” she said, “ and of some note, as I have heard ; yet you seem wondrous slow in reading text hand.—How say you, are these certificates true or no ? ”

“ Madam,” said Tressilian, with obvious embarrassment and hesitation, anxious to avoid admitting evidence which he might afterwards have reason to confute, yet equally desirous to keep his word to Amy, and to give her, as he had promised, space to plead her own cause in her own way.—“ Madam—Madam, your Grace calls 10 on me to admit evidence which ought to be proved valid by those who found their defence upon it.”

“ Why, Tressilian, thou art critical as well as poetical,” said the Queen, bending on him a brow of displeasure ; “ methinks these writings, being produced in the presence of the noble Earl to whom this Castle pertains, and his honour being appealed to as the guarantee of their authenticity, might be evidence enough for thee. But since thou lists to be so formal—Varney, or rather my Lord of Leicester, for the affair becomes yours,” (these 20 words, though spoken at random, thrilled through the Earl’s marrow and bones,) “ what evidence have you as touching these certificates ? ”

Varney hastened to reply, preventing Leicester,—“ So please your Majesty, my young Lord of Oxford, who is here in presence, knows Master Anthony Foster’s hand and his character.”

The Earl of Oxford, a young unthrift, whom Foster had more than once accommodated with loans on usurious interest, acknowledged, on this appeal, that he 30 knew him as a wealthy and independent franklin, supposed to be worth much money, and verified the certificate produced to be his handwriting.

"And, who speaks to the Doctor's certificate?" said the Queen. "Alasco, methinks, is his name."

Masters, her Majesty's physician, (not the less willingly that he remembered his repulse from Say's Court, and thought that his present testimony might gratify Leicester, and mortify the Earl of Sussex and his faction,) acknowledged that he had more than once consulted with Doctor Alasco, and spoke of him as a man of extraordinary learning and hidden acquirements, though  
10 not altogether in the regular course of practice. The Earl of Huntingdon, Lord Leicester's brother-in-law, and the old Countess of Rutland, next sang his praises, and both remembered the thin beautiful Italian hand in which he was wont to write his receipts, and which corresponded to the certificate produced as his.

"And now, I trust, Master Tressilian, this matter is ended," said the Queen. "We will do something ere the night is older to reconcile old Sir Hugh Robsart to the match. You have done your duty something more  
20 than boldly; but we were no woman, had we not compassion for the wounds which true love deals; so we forgive your audacity, and your uncleansed boots withal, which have wellnigh overpowered my Lord of Leicester's perfumes."

So spoke Elizabeth, whose nicety of scent was one of the characteristics of her organization, as appeared long afterwards when she expelled Essex from her presence, on a charge against his boots similar to that which she now expressed against those of Tressilian.

30 But Tressilian had by this time collected himself, astonished as he had at first been by the audacity of the falsehood so feebly supported, and placed in array against the evidence of his own eyes. He rushed forward,

kneeled down, and caught the Queen by the skirt of her robe. "As you are Christian woman," he said, "madam, as you are crowned Queen, to do equal justice among your subjects—as you hope yourself to have fair hearing (which God grant you) at that last bar at which we must all plead, grant me one small request! Decide not this matter so hastily. Give me but twenty-four hours' interval, and I will, at the end of that brief space, produce evidence which will show to demonstration, that these certificates, which state this unhappy lady to be now 10 ill at ease in Oxfordshire, are false as hell!"

"Let go my train, sir!" said Elizabeth, who was startled at his vehemence, though she had too much of lion in her to fear; "the fellow must be distraught—that witty knave, my godson Harrington, must have him into his rhymes of Orlando Furioso!—And yet, by this light, there is something strange in the vehemence of his demand.—Speak, Tressilian; what wilt thou do if, at the end of these four-and-twenty hours, thou canst not confute a fact so solemnly proved as this lady's illness?" 20

"I will lay down my head on the block," answered Tressilian

"Pshaw!" replied the Queen. "God's light! thou speak'st like a fool. What head falls in England but by just sentence of English law?—I ask thee, man—if thou hast sense to understand me—wilt thou, if thou shalt fail in this improbable attempt of thine, render me a good and sufficient reason why thou dost undertake it?"

Tressilian paused, and again hesitated; because he 30 felt convinced, that if, within the interval demanded, Amy should become reconciled to her husband, he would in that case do her the worst of offices by again ripping



up the whole circumstances before Elizabeth, and showing how that wise and jealous princess had been imposed upon by false testimonials. The consciousness of this dilemma renewed his extreme embarrassment of look, voice, and manner ; he hesitated, looked down, and on the Queen repeating her question with a stern voice and flashing eye, he admitted with faltering words, " That it might be—he could not positively—that is, in certain events—explain the reasons and grounds on which he  
10 acted."

" Now, by the soul of King Henry," said the Queen, " this is either moonstruck madness, or very knavery ! —Seest thou, Raleigh, thy friend is far too Pindaric for this presence. Have him away, and make us quit of him, or it shall be the worse for him ; for his flights are too unbridled for any place but Parnassus, or Saint Luke's Hospital. But come back instantly thyself, when he is placed under fitting restraint.—We wish we had seen the beauty which could make such havoc in a wise  
20 man's brain."

Tressilian was again endeavouring to address the Queen, when Raleigh, in obedience to the orders he had received, interfered, and, with Blount's assistance, half led, half forced him out of the presence-chamber, where he himself indeed began to think his appearance did his cause more harm than good.

When they had attained the antechamber, Raleigh entreated Blount to see Tressilian safely conducted into the apartments allotted to the Earl of Sussex's followers,  
30 and, if necessary, recommended that a guard should be mounted on him.

## CHAPTER XIII.

"It is a melancholy matter," said the Queen, when Tressilian was withdrawn, "to see a wise and learned man's wit thus pitifully unsettled. Yet this public display of his imperfection of brain plainly shows us that his supposed injury and accusation were fruitless; and therefore, my Lord of Leicester, we remember your suit formerly made to us in behalf of your faithful servant Varney, whose good gifts and fidelity, as they are useful to you, ought to have due reward from us, knowing well that your lordship, and all you have, are so earnestly devoted to our service. And we render Varney the honour more especially, that we are a guest, and we fear a chargeable and troublesome one, under your lordship's roof; and also for the satisfaction of the good old Knight of Devon, Sir Hugh Robsart, whose daughter he hath married; and we trust the especial mark of grace which we are about to confer, may reconcile him to his son-in-law—Your sword, my Lord of Leicester."

The Earl unbuckled his sword, and, taking it by the point, presented on bended knee the hilt to Elizabeth. 20

She took it slowly, drew it from the scabbard, and while the ladies who stood around turned away their eyes with real or affected shuddering, she noted with a curious eye the high polish and rich damasked ornaments upon the glittering blade.

"Had I been a man," she said, "methinks none of my ancestors would have loved a good sword better. As it is with me, I like to look on one, and could, like the Fairy, of whom I have read in some Italian rhymes—were my godson Harrington here, he could tell me the 30

passage—even trim my hair, and arrange my head-gear, in such a steel mirror as this is.—Richard Varney, come forth, and kneel down. In the name of God and Saint George, we dub thee knight! Be Faithful, Brave, and Fortunate—Arise, Sir Richard Varney ”

Varney arose and retired, making a deep obeisance to the Sovereign who had done him so much honour

It is unnecessary to say any thing farther of the festivities of the evening, which were so brilliant in  
 10 themselves, and received with such obvious and willing satisfaction by the Queen, that Leicester retired to his own apartment, with all the giddy raptures of successful ambition. Varney, who had changed his splendid attire, and now waited on his patron in a very modest and plain undress, attended to do the honours of the Earl's *coucher*.

“How! Sir Richard,” said Leicester, smiling, “your new rank scarce suits the humility of this attendance.”

“I would disown that rank, my lord,” said Varney,  
 “could I think it was to remove me to a distance from  
 20 your lordship's person.”

“Thou art a grateful fellow,” said Leicester; “but I must not allow you to do what would abate you in the opinion of others.”

While thus speaking, he still accepted, without hesitation, the offices about his person, which the new-made knight seemed to render as eagerly as if he had really felt, in discharging the task, that pleasure which his words expressed.

“I am not afraid of men's misconstruction,” he said,  
 30 in answer to Leicester's remark, “since there is not—  
 (permit me to undo the collar)—a man within the Castle, who does not expect very soon to see persons of a rank far superior to that which, by your goodness, I now hold,

rendering the duties of the bedchamber to you, and accounting it an honour ”

“ It might, indeed, so have been ”—said the Earl, with an involuntary sigh : and then presently added, “ My gown, Varney—I will look out on the night. Is not the moon near to the full ? ”

“ I think so, my lord, according to the calendar,” answered Varney.

There was an abutting window, which opened on a small projecting balcony of stone, battlemented as is <sup>10</sup> usual in Gothic castles. The Earl undid the lattice, and stepped out into the open air. The station he had chosen commanded an extensive view of the lake, and woodlands beyond, where the bright moonlight rested on the clear blue waters, and the distant masses of oak and elm trees. The moon rode high in the heavens, attended by thousands and thousands of inferior luminaries. All seemed already to be hushed in the nether world, excepting occasionally the voice of the watch, (for the yeomen of the guard performed that duty <sup>20</sup> wherever the Queen was present in person,) and the distant baying of the hounds, disturbed by the preparations amongst the grooms and prickers for a magnificent hunt, which was to be the amusement of the next day.

Leicester looked out on the blue arch of heaven, with gestures and a countenance expressive of anxious exultation, while Varney, who remained within the darkened apartment, could, (himself unnoticed,) with a secret satisfaction, see his patron stretch his hands with earnest gesticulation towards the heavenly bodies. <sup>30</sup>

“ Ye distant orbs of living fire,” so ran the muttered invocation of the ambitious Earl, “ ye are silent while you wheel your mystic rounds, but Wisdom has given to

you a voice. Tell me, then, to what end is my high course destined ! Shall the greatness to which I have aspired be bright, pre-eminent, and stable as your own ; or am I but doomed to draw a brief and glittering train along the nightly darkness, and then to sink down to earth, like the base refuse of those artificial fires with which men emulate your rays ? ”

He looked on the heavens in profound silence for a minute or two longer, and then again stepped into the  
10 apartment, where Varney seemed to have been engaged in putting the Earl's jewels into a casket.

“ What said Alasco of my horoscope ? ” demanded Leicester. “ You already told me, but it has escaped me, for I think but lightly of that art.”

“ Many learned and great men have thought otherwise,” said Varney ; “ and, not to flatter your lordship, my own opinion leans that way.”

“ Ay, Saul among the prophets ? ” said Leicester—  
“ I thought thou wert sceptical in all such matters as  
20 thou couldst neither see, hear, smell, taste, or touch, and that thy belief was limited by thy senses.”

“ Perhaps, my lord,” said Varney, “ I may be misled on the present occasion, by my wish to find the predictions of astrology true. Alasco says, that your favourite planet is culminating, and that the adverse influence—he would not use a plainer term—though not overcome, was evidently combusted, I think he said, or retrograde.”

“ It is even so,” said Leicester, looking at an abstract of astrological calculations which he had in his hand ;  
30 “ the stronger influence will prevail, and, as I think, the evil hour pass away.—Lend me your hand, Sir Richard, to doff my gown—and remain an instant, if it is not too burdensome to your knighthood, while I compose

myself to sleep. I believe the bustle of this day has fevered my blood, for it streams through my veins like a current of molten lead—remain an instant, I pray you—I would fain feel my eyes heavy ere I closed them.”

Varney officiously assisted his lord to bed, and placed a massive silver night-lamp, with a short sword, on a marble table which stood close by the head of the couch. Either in order to avoid the light of the lamp, or to hide his countenance from Varney, Leicester drew the curtain, heavy with entwined silk and gold, so as completely to 10 shade his face. Varney took a seat near the bed, but with his back towards his master, as if to intimate that he was not watching him, and quietly waited till Leicester himself led the way to the topic by which his mind was engrossed.

“And so, Varney,” said the Earl, after waiting in vain till his dependant should commence the conversation, “men talk of the Queen’s favour towards me?”

“Ay, my good lord,” said Varney; “of what can they else, since it is so strongly manifested?” 20

“She is indeed my good and gracious mistress,” said Leicester, after another pause; “but it is written, ‘Put not thy trust in Princes.’”

“A good sentence and a true,” said Varney, “unless you can unite their interest with yours so absolutely, that they must needs sit on your wrist like hooded hawks.”

“I know what thou meanest,” said Leicester, impatiently, “though thou art to-night so prudentially careful of what thou sayest to me—Thou wouldst 30 intimate, I might marry the Queen if I would?”

“It is your speech, my lord, not mine,” answered Varney; “but whose soever be the speech, it is the

thought of ninety-nine out of an hundred men throughout broad England ”

“ Ay, but,” said Leicester, turning himself in his bed, “ the hundredth man knows better. Thou, for example, knowest the obstacle that cannot be overleaped.”

“ It must, my lord, if the stars speak true,” said Varney, composedly.

“ What ! talk’st thou of them,” said Leicester, “ that believest not in them or in aught else ? ”

10 “ You mistake, my lord, under your gracious pardon,” said Varney ; “ I believe in many things that predict the future. I believe, if showers fall in April, that we shall have flowers in May , that if the sun shines, grain will ripen ; and I believe in much natural philosophy to the same effect, which, if the stars swear to me, I will say the stars speak the truth. And in like manner, I will not disbelieve that which I see wished for and expected on earth, solely because the astrologers have read it in the heavens.”

20 “ Thou art right,” said Leicester, again tossing himself on his couch.—“ Earth does wish for it. I have had advices from the reformed churches of Germany—from the Low Countries—from Switzerland, urging this as a point on which Europe’s safety depends. France will not oppose it.—The ruling party in Scotland look to it as their best security.—Spain fears it, but cannot prevent it—and yet thou knowest it is impossible ”

“ I know not that, my lord,” said Varney, “ the Countess is indisposed.”

30 “ Villain ! ” said Leicester, starting up on his couch, and seizing the sword which lay on the table beside him, “ go thy thoughts that way ?—thou wouldst not do murder ! ”

"For whom, or what, do you hold me, my lord?" said Varney, assuming the superiority of an innocent man subjected to unjust suspicion. "I said nothing to deserve such a horrid imputation as your violence infers. I said but that the Countess was ill. And Countess though she be—lovely and beloved as she is, surely your lordship must hold her to be mortal? She may die, and your lordship's hand become once more your own."

"Away ' away!" said Leicester; "let me have no more of this"

10

"Good night, my lord," said Varney, seeming to understand this as a command to depart; but Leicester's voice interrupted his purpose.

"Thou 'scapest me not thus, Sir Fool," said he; "I think thy knighthood has addled thy brains.—Confess thou hast talked of impossibilities, as of things which may come to pass."

"My lord, long live your fair Countess," said Varney; "but neither your love nor my good wishes can make her immortal. But God grant she live long to be happy 20 herself, and to render you so! I see not but you may be King of England notwithstanding."

"Nay, now, Varney, thou art stark-mad," said Leicester.

"I would I were myself within the same nearness to a good estate of freehold," said Varney. "Have we not known in other countries, how a left-handed marriage might subsist betwixt persons of differing degree?—ay, and be no hindrance to prevent the husband from conjoining himself afterwards with a more suitable 30 partner?"

"I have heard of such things in Germany," said Leicester.



“Ay, and the most learned doctors in foreign universities justify the practice from the Old Testament,” said Varney. “And after all, where is the harm? The beautiful partner, whom you have chosen for true love, has your secret hours of relaxation and affection. Her fame is safe—her conscience may slumber securely.—You have wealth to provide royally for your issue, should heaven bless you with offspring. Meanwhile you may give to Elizabeth ten times the leisure, and ten  
10 thousand times the affection, that ever Don Philip of Spain spared to her sister Mary; yet you know how she doted on him though so cold and neglectful. It requires but a close mouth and an open brow, and you keep your Eleanor and your fair Rosamond far enough separate.—Leave me to build you a bower to which no jealous Queen shall find a clew.”

#### CHAPTER XIV.

WE are now to return to Mervyn's Bower, the apartment or rather the prison, of the unfortunate Countess of Leicester, who for some time kept within bounds her  
20 uncertainty and her impatience. She was aware that, in the tumult of the day, there might be some delay ere her letter could be safely conveyed to the hands of Leicester, and that some time more might elapse ere he could extricate himself from the necessary attendance on Elizabeth, to come and visit her in her secret bower. “I will not expect him,” she said, “till night—he cannot be absent from his royal guest, even to see me. He will, I know, come earlier if it be possible, but I will not expect him before night.”—And yet all the while she

did expect him ; and, while she tried to argue herself into a contrary belief, each hasty noise, of the hundred which she heard, sounded like the hurried step of Leicester on the staircase, hasting to fold her in his arms.

The fatigue of body which Amy had lately undergone, with the agitation of mind natural to so cruel a state of uncertainty, began by degrees strongly to affect her nerves, and she almost feared her total inability to maintain the necessary self-command through the scenes which might lie before her. But, although 10 spoiled by an over-indulgent system of education, Amy had naturally a mind of great power, united with a frame which her share in her father's woodland exercises had rendered uncommonly healthy. She summoned to her aid such mental and bodily resources ; and not unconscious how much the issue of her fate might depend on her own self-possession, she prayed internally for strength of body and for mental fortitude, and resolved, at the same time, to yield to no nervous impulse which might weaken either. 20

Yet when the great bell of the Castle began to send its pealing clamour abroad, in signal of the arrival of the royal procession, the din was so painfully acute to ears rendered nervously sensitive by anxiety, that she could hardly forbear shrieking with anguish, in answer to every stunning clash of the relentless peal.

Shortly afterwards, when the small apartment was at once enlightened by the shower of artificial fires with which the air was suddenly filled, and which crossed each other like fiery spirits, the Countess felt at first as if 30 each rocket shot close by her eyes. But she struggled against these fantastic terrors, and compelled herself to arise, stand by the window, look out, and gaze upon a

sight, which at another time would have appeared to her at once captivating and fearful. The magnificent towers of the Castle were enveloped in garlands of artificial fire, or shrouded with tiaras of pale smoke. The surface of the lake glowed like molten iron, while many fireworks, whose flame continued to exist in the opposing element, dived and rose, hissed and roared, and spouted fire, like so many dragons of enchantment, sporting upon a burning lake.

10 By degrees the sounds of revelry died away, and the Countess withdrew from the window at which she had sate listening to them. It was night, but the moon afforded considerable light in the room, so that Amy was able to make the arrangement which she judged necessary. There was hope that Leicester might come to her apartment as soon as the revel in the Castle had subsided ; but there was also risk she might be disturbed by some unauthorized intruder. She had lost confidence in the key, since Tressilian had entered so easily, though the  
20 door was locked on the inside ; yet all the additional security she could think of, was to place the table across the door, that she might be warned by the noise, should any one attempt to enter. Having taken these necessary precautions, the unfortunate lady withdrew to her couch, stretched herself down on it, mused in anxious expectation, and counted more than one hour after midnight, till exhausted nature proved too strong for love, for grief, for fear, nay even for uncertainty, and she slept.

The Countess slept, then, for several hours, and  
30 dreamed that she was in the ancient house at Cumnor-Place, listening for the low whistle with which Leicester often used to announce his presence in the court-yard, when arriving suddenly on one of his stolen visits. But

on this occasion, instead of a whistle, she heard the peculiar blast of a bugle-horn, such as her father used to wind on the fall of the stag, and which huntsmen then called a *mort*.

The Countess awoke to hear a real bugle-note, or rather the combined breath of many bugles, sounding not the *mort*, but the jolly *reveille*, to remind the inmates of the Castle of Kenilworth that the pleasures of the day were to commence with a magnificent stag-hunting in the neighbouring Chase. Amy started up from her couch, listened to the sound, saw the first beams of the summer morning already twinkle through the lattice of her window, and recollected, with feelings of giddy agony, where she was, and how circumstanced.

"He thinks not of *me*," she said—"he will not come nigh me! A Queen is his guest, and what cares he in what corner of his huge Castle a wretch like me pines in doubt, which is fast fading into despair?" At once a sound at the door, as of some one attempting to open it softly, filled her with an ineffable mixture of joy and fear. 20 and, hastening to remove the obstacle she had placed against the door, and to unlock it, she had the precaution to ask, "Is it thou, my love?"

"Yes, my Countess," murmured a whisper in reply.

She threw open the door, and exclaiming, "Leicester!" flung her arms around the neck of the man who stood without, muffled in his cloak.

"No—not quite Leicester," answered Michael Lambourne, for he it was, returning the caress with vehemence,—“not quite Leicester, my lovely and most 30 loving Duchess, but as good a man.” •

With an exertion of force, of which she would at another time have thought herself incapable, the

Countess freed herself from the profane and profaning grasp of the drunken debauchee, and retreated into the midst of her apartment, where despair gave her courage to make a stand.

As Lambourne, on entering, dropped the lap of his cloak from his face, she knew Varney's profligate servant; the very last person, excepting his detested master, by whom she would have wished to be discovered.

10 "Good friend," said the Countess, in great terror at the ruffian's determined and audacious manner, "I prithee begone, and leave me."

"And so I will, pretty one, when we are tired of each other's company—not a jot sooner."—He seized her by the arm, while, incapable of further defence, she uttered shriek upon shriek. "Nay, scream away if you like it," said he, still holding her fast; "I have heard the sea at the loudest, and I mind a sqalling woman no more than a miauling kitten.—I have heard fifty or a  
20 hundred screaming at once, when there was a town stormed."

The cries of the Countess, however, brought unexpected aid, in the person of Lawrence Staples, who had heard her exclamations from his apartment below, and entered in good time to save her from being discovered.

"Good sir, worthy sir!" said the Countess, addressing the jailor, "do but save me from him, for the sake of mercy!"

"She speaks fairly," said the jailor, "and I will take  
30 her part. I love my prisoners; and I have had as good prisoners under any key, as they have had in Newgate or the Compter. So, let go the woman, or I'll knock your brains out with my keys."

"I'll make a blood-pudding of thy midriff first," answered Lambourne, laying his left hand on his dagger, but still detaining the Countess by the arm with his right.—"So have at thee, thou old ostrich, whose only living is upon a bunch of iron keys!"

Lawrence raised the arm of Michael, and prevented him from drawing his dagger; and as Lambourne struggled and strove to shake him off, the Countess made a sudden exertion on her side, and slipping her hand out of her glove on which the ruffian still kept hold, she <sup>10</sup> gained her liberty, and escaping from the apartment, ran down stairs, while, at the same moment, she heard the two combatants fall on the floor with a noise which increased her terror. The outer wicket offered no impediment to her flight, having been opened for Lambourne's admittance; so that she succeeded in escaping down the stair, and fled into the Pleasance, which seemed to her hasty glance the direction in which she was most likely to avoid pursuit.

The retreat which she had chosen gave her the easy <sup>20</sup> alternative of avoiding observation. It was but stepping back to the farthest recess of a grotto, ornamented with rustic work and moss seats, and terminated by a fountain, and she might easily remain concealed, or at her pleasure discover herself to any solitary wanderer, whose curiosity might lead him to that romantic retirement. Anticipating such an opportunity, she looked into the clear basin, which the silent fountain held up to her like a mirror, and felt shocked at her own appearance, and doubtful at the same time, muffled and disfigured as <sup>30</sup> her disguise made her seem to herself, whether any female (and it was from the compassion of her own sex that she chiefly expected sympathy) would engage in

conference with so suspicious an object. Reasoning thus like a woman, to whom external appearance is scarcely in any circumstances a matter of unimportance, and like a beauty, who had some confidence in the power of her own charms, she laid aside her travelling cloak and capotaine hat, and placed them beside her, so that she could assume them in an instant, ere one could penetrate from the entrance of the grotto to its extremity, in case the intrusion of Varney or of Lam-  
10 bourne should render such disguise necessary. The dress which she wore under these vestments was somewhat of a theatrical cast, so as to suit the assumed personage of one of the females who was to act in the pageant. Wayland had found the means of arranging it thus upon the second day of their journey, having experienced the service arising from the assumption of such a character on the preceding day. The fountain, acting both as a mirror and ewer, afforded Amy the means of a brief toilette, of which she availed herself as  
20 hastily as possible; then took in her hand her small casket of jewels, in case she might find them useful intercessors, and retiring to the darkest and most sequestered nook, sat down on a seat of moss, and awaited till fate should give her some chance of rescue, or of propitiating an intercessor.

## CHAPTER XV.

It chanced upon that memorable morning, that one of the earliest of the huntress train, who appeared from her chamber in full array for the Chase, was the Princess for whom all these pleasures were instituted, England's

Maiden Queen. I know not if it were by chance, or out of the befitting courtesy due to a mistress by whom he was so much honoured, that she had scarcely made one step beyond the threshold of her chamber, ere Leicester was by her side, and proposed to her, until the preparations of the Chase had been completed, to view the Pleasance, and the gardens which it connected with the Castle-yard.

To this new scene of pleasures they walked, the Earl's arm affording his Sovereign the occasional support 10 which she required, where flights of steps, then a favourite ornament in a garden, conducted them from terrace to terrace, and from parterre to parterre. The ladies in attendance, gifted with prudence, or endowed perhaps with the amiable desire of acting as they would be done by, did not conceive their duty to the Queen's person required them, though they lost not sight of her, to approach so near as to share, or perhaps disturb, the conversation betwixt the Queen and the Earl, who was not only her host, but also her most trusted, esteemed, 20 and favoured servant. They contented themselves with admiring the grace of this illustrious couple, whose robes of state were now exchanged for hunting suits, almost equally magnificent.

Elizabeth's silvan dress, which was of a pale blue silk, with silver lace and *angullettes*, approached in form to that of the ancient Amazons; and was, therefore, well suited at once to her height, and to the dignity of her mien, which her conscious rank and long habits of authority had rendered in some degree too masculine 30 to be seen to the best advantage in ordinary female weeds. Leicester's hunting suit of Lincoln-green, richly embroidered with gold, and crossed by the gay baldric,



which sustained a bugle-horn, and a wood-knife instead of a sword, became its master, as did his other vestments of court or of war. For such were the perfections of his form and mien, that Leicester was always supposed to be seen to the greatest advantage in the character and dress which for the time he represented or wore.

Horses in the meanwhile neighed, and champed the bits with impatience in the base-court, hounds yelled in their couples, and yeomen, rangers, and prickers, lamented the exhaling of the dew, which would prevent the scent from lying. But Leicester had another chase in view, or, to speak more justly towards him, had become engaged in it without premeditation, as the high-spirited hunter which follows the cry of the hounds that have crossed his path by accident. The Queen—an accomplished and handsome woman—the pride of England, the hope of France and Holland, and the dread of Spain, had probably listened with more than usual favour to that mixture of romantic gallantry with which she always loved to be addressed ; and the Earl had, in vanity, in ambition, or in both, thrown in more and more of that delicious ingredient, until his importunity became the language of love itself.

“ No, Dudley,” said Elizabeth, yet it was with broken accents —“ No, I must be the mother of my people. Other ties, that make the lowly maiden happy, are denied to her Sovereign.—No, Leicester, urge it no more—were I as others, free to seek my own happiness—then, indeed—but it cannot—cannot be.—Delay the chase—delay it for half an hour—and leave me, my lord.”

“ How, leave you, madam ! ” said Leicester,—“ Has my madness offended you ? ”

"No, Leicester, not so!" answered the Queen, hastily; "but it is madness, and must not be repeated. Go—but go not far from hence—and meantime let no one intrude on my privacy."

While she spoke thus, Dudley bowed deeply, and retired with a slow and melancholy air. The Queen stood gazing after him, and murmured to herself.—  
"Were it possible—were it *but* possible!—but no—no—Elizabeth must be the wife and mother of England alone."

10

As she spoke thus, and in order to avoid some one whose step she heard approaching, the Queen turned into the grotto in which her hapless, and yet but too successful, rival lay concealed.

The mind of England's Elizabeth, if somewhat shaken by the agitating interview to which she had just put a period, was of that firm and decided character which soon recovers its natural tone. It was like one of those ancient druidical monuments called Rocking-stones. The finger of Cupid, boy as he is painted, could put her 20 feelings in motion, but the power of Hercules could not have destroyed their equilibrium. As she advanced with a slow pace towards the inmost extremity of the grotto, her countenance, ere she had proceeded half the length, had recovered its dignity of look, and her mien its air of command.

It was then the Queen became aware, that a female figure was placed beside, or rather partly behind, an alabaster column, at the foot of which arose the pellucid fountain, which occupied the inmost recess of the 30 twilight grotto. The classical mind of Elizabeth suggested the story of Numa and Egeria, and she doubted not that some Italian sculptor had here repre-

sented the Naiad, whose inspirations gave laws to Rome. As she advanced, she became doubtful whether she beheld a statue, or a form of flesh and blood. The unfortunate Amy, indeed, remained motionless, betwixt the desire which she had to make her condition known to one of her own sex, and her awe for the stately form which approached her, and which, though her eyes had never before beheld, her fears instantly suspected to be the personage she really was. Amy had arisen from  
10 her seat with the purpose of addressing the lady, who entered the grotto alone, and, as she at first thought, so opportunely. But when she recollected the alarm which Leicester had expressed at the Queen's knowing aught of their union, and became more and more satisfied that the person whom she now beheld was Elizabeth herself, she stood with one foot advanced and one withdrawn, her arms, head, and hands, perfectly motionless, and her cheek as pallid as the alabaster pedestal against which she leaned. Her dress was of pale sea-green silk,  
20 little distinguished in that imperfect light, and somewhat resembled the drapery of a Grecian Nymph, such an antique disguise having been thought the most secure, where so many masquers and revellers were assembled; so that the Queen's doubt of her being a living form was well justified by all contingent circumstances, as well as by the bloodless cheek and the fixed eye.

Elizabeth remained in doubt, even after she had approached within a few paces, whether she did not gaze on a statue so cunningly fashioned, that by the  
30 doubtful light it could not be distinguished from reality. She stopped, therefore, and fixed upon this interesting object her princely look with so much keenness, that the astonishment which had kept Amy immovable gave way

to awe, and she gradually cast down her eyes, and drooped her head under the commanding gaze of the Sovereign. Still, however, she remained in all respects, saving this slow and profound inclination of the head, motionless and silent.

From her dress, and the casket which she instinctively held in her hand. Elizabeth naturally conjectured that the beautiful but mute figure which she beheld was a performer in one of the various theatrical pageants which had been placed in different situations to surprise 10 her with her homage, and that the poor player, overcome with awe at her presence, had either forgot the part assigned her, or lacked courage to go through it. It was natural and courteous to give her some encouragement, and Elizabeth accordingly said, in a tone of condescending kindness,—“How now, fair Nymph of this lovely grotto—art thou spell-bound and struck with dumbness by the charms of the wicked enchanter whom men term Fear?—We are his sworn enemy, maiden, and can reverse his charm. Speak, we command thee.” 20

Instead of answering her by speech, the unfortunate Countess dropped on her knee before the Queen, let her casket fall from her hand, and clasping her palms together, looked up in the Queen's face with such a mixed agony of fear and supplication, that Elizabeth was considerably affected.

“What may this mean?” she said; “this is a stronger passion than befits the occasion. Stand up, damsel,—what wouldst thou have with us?”

“Your protection, madam,” faltered forth the un- 30 happy petitioner.

“Each daughter of England has it while she is worthy of it,” replied the Queen; “but your distress seems to

have a deeper root than a forgotten task. Why, and in what, do you crave our protection ? ”

Amy hastily endeavoured to recall what she were best to say, which might secure herself from the imminent dangers that surrounded her, without endangering her husband ; and plunging from one thought to another, amidst the chaos which filled her mind, she could at length, in answer to the Queen’s repeated enquiries, in what she sought protection, only falter out, “ Alas !  
10 I know not.”

“ This is folly, maiden,” said Elizabeth, impatiently ; for there was something in the extreme confusion of the suppliant, which irritated her curiosity, as well as interested her feelings. “ The sick man must tell his malady to the physician, nor are we accustomed to ask questions so oft, without receiving an answer.”

“ I request—I implore,” stammered forth the unfortunate Countess,—“ I beseech your gracious protection—against—against one Varney.” She choked  
20 wellnigh as she uttered the fatal word, which was instantly caught up by the Queen.

“ What, Varney—Sir Richard Varney—the servant of Lord Leicester ?—What, damsel, are you to him, or he to you ? ”

“ I—I—was his prisoner—and he practised on my life—and I broke forth to—to ”——

“ To throw thyself on my protection, doubtless,” said Elizabeth. “ Thou shalt have it—that is, if thou art worthy ; for we will sift this matter to the uttermost.—  
30 Thou art,” she said, bending on the Countess an eye which seemed designed to pierce her very inmost soul, —“ thou art Amy, daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall ? ” “

"Forgive me—forgive me—most gracious Princess!" said Amy, dropping once more on her knee, from which she had arisen.

"For what should I forgive thee, silly wench?" said Elizabeth; "for being the daughter of thine own father? Thou art brain-sick, surely. Well, I see I must wring the story from thee by inches.—Thou didst deceive thine old and honoured father—thy look confesses it—cheated Master Tressilian—thy blush avouches it—and married this same Varney?"

10

Amy sprung on her feet, and interrupted the Queen eagerly, with, "No, madam, no—as there is a God above us, I am not the sordid wretch you would make me! I am not the wife of that contemptible slave—of that most deliberate villain! I am not the wife of Varney! I would rather be the bride of Destruction!"

The Queen, overwhelmed in her turn by Amy's vehemence, stood silent for an instant, and then replied, "Why, God ha' mercy, woman!—I see thou canst talk fast enough when the theme likes thee. Nay, tell me, 20 woman," she continued, for to the impulse of curiosity was now added that of an undefined jealousy that some deception had been practised on her,—“tell me, woman—for by God's day, I WILL know—whose wife, or whose paramour, art thou? Speak out, and be speedy.—Thou wert better dally with a lioness than with Elizabeth.”

Urged to this extremity, dragged as it were by irresistible force to the verge of the precipice, which she saw but could not avoid,—permitted not a moment's 30 respite by the eager words and menacing gestures of the offended Queen, Amy at length uttered in despair, "The Earl of Leicester knows it all."

“The Earl of Leicester!” said Elizabeth, in utter astonishment—“The Earl of Leicester!” she repeated, with kindling anger,—“Woman, thou art set on to this—thou dost belie him—he takes no keep of such things as thou art. Thou art suborned to slander the noblest lord, and the truest-hearted gentleman in England! But were he the right hand of our trust, or something yet dearer to us, thou shalt have thy hearing, and that in his presence. Come with me—come with me instantly!”

10 As Amy shrunk back with terror, which the incensed Queen interpreted as that of conscious guilt, Elizabeth rapidly advanced, seized on her arm, and hastened with swift and long steps out of the grotto, and along the principal alley of the Pleasance, dragging with her the terrified Countess, whom she still held by the arm, and whose utmost exertions could but just keep pace with those of the indignant Queen.

## CHAPTER XVI.

LEICESTER was at this moment the centre of a splendid group of lords and ladies, assembled together under an  
20 arcade, or portico, which closed the alley. The company had drawn together in that place to attend the commands of her Majesty when the hunting-party should go forward, and their astonishment may be imagined, when, instead of seeing Elizabeth advance towards them with her usual measured dignity of motion, they beheld her walking so rapidly that she was in the midst of them ere they were aware; and then observed, with fear and surprise, that her features were flushed betwixt anger and agitation, that her hair was loosened by her haste of motion,

and that her eyes sparkled as they were wont when the spirit of Henry VIII. mounted highest in his daughter. Nor were they less astonished at the appearance of the pale, extenuated, half dead, yet still lovely female, whom the Queen upheld by main strength with one hand, while with the other she waved aside the ladies and nobles who pressed towards her, under the idea that she was taken suddenly ill. "Where is my Lord of Leicester?" she said, in a tone that thrilled with astonishment all the courtiers who stood around—"Stand forth, my Lord 10 of Leicester!"

If, in the midst of the most serene day of summer, when all is light and laughing around, a thunderbolt were to fall from the clear blue vault of heaven, and rend the earth at the very feet of some careless traveller, he could not gaze upon the smouldering chasm, which so unexpectedly yawned before him, with half the astonishment and fear which Leicester felt at the sight that so suddenly presented itself. He had that instant been receiving, with a political affectation of disavowing and 20 misunderstanding their meaning, the half uttered, half intimated congratulations of the courtiers upon the favour of the Queen, carried apparently to its highest pitch during the interview of that morning; from which most of them seemed to augur, that he might soon arise from their equal in rank to become their master. And now, while the subdued yet proud smile with which he disclaimed those inferences was yet curling his cheek, the Queen shot into the circle, her passions excited to the uttermost; and, supporting with one hand, and 30 apparently without an effort, the pale and sinking form of his almost expiring wife, and pointing with the finger of the other to her half dead features, demanded in a



voice that sounded to the ears of the astounded statesman like the last dread trumpet-call, that is to summon body and spirit to the judgment-seat, "Knowest thou this woman?"

As, at the blast of that last trumpet, the guilty shall call upon the mountains to cover them, Leicester's inward thoughts invoked the stately arch which he had built in his pride, to burst its strong conjunction, and overwhelm them in its ruins. But the cemented stones, 10 architrave and battlement, stood fast; and it was the proud master himself, who, as if some actual pressure had bent him to the earth, kneeled before Elizabeth, and prostrated his brow to the marble flag-stones on which she stood.

"Leicester," said Elizabeth, in a voice which trembled with passion, "could I think thou hast practised on me—on me thy Sovereign—on me thy confiding, thy too partial mistress, the base and ungrateful deception which thy present confusion surmises—by all that is holy, 20 false lord, that head of thine were in as great peril as ever was thy father's!"

Leicester had not conscious innocence, but he had pride to support him. He raised slowly his brow and features, which were black and swoln with contending emotions, and only replied, "My head cannot fall but by the sentence of my peers—to them I will plead, and not to a princess who thus requites my faithful service!"

"What! my lords," said Elizabeth, looking around, "we are defied, I think—defied in the Castle we have 30 ourselves bestowed on this proud man!—my Lord Shrewsbury, you are marshal of England, attach him of high treason!"

"Whom does your Grace mean?" said Shrewsbury,

much surprised, for he had that instant joined the astonished circle.

"Whom should I mean, but that traitor Dudley, Earl of Leicester"—Cousin of Hunsdon, order out your band of gentlemen pensioners, and take him into instant custody.—I say, villain, make haste!"

Hunsdon, a rough old noble, who, from his relationship to the Boleyns, was accustomed to use more freedom with the Queen than almost any other dared to do, replied bluntly, "And it is like your Grace might order 10 me to the Tower to-morrow, for making too much haste. I do beseech you to be patient."

"Patient—God's life!" exclaimed the Queen,—  
"name not the word to me—thou know'st not of what he is guilty!"

Amy, who had by this time in some degree recovered herself, and who saw her husband, as she conceived, in the utmost danger from the rage of an offended Sovereign, instantly (and alas! how many women have done the same) forgot her own wrongs, and her own 20 danger, in her apprehensions for him, and throwing herself before the Queen, embraced her knees, while she exclaimed, "He is guiltless, madam—he is guiltless—no one can lay aught to the charge of the noble Leicester!"

"Why, minion," answered the Queen, "didst not thou thyself, say that the Earl of Leicester was privy to thy whole history?"

"Did I say so?" repeated the unhappy Amy, laying aside every consideration of consistency, and of self- 30 interest; "O, if I did, I foully belied him. May God so judge me, as I believe he was never privy to a thought that would harm me!"

"Woman!" said Elizabeth, "I will know who has moved thee to this, or my wrath—and the wrath of kings is a flaming fire—shall wither and consume thee like a weed in the furnace."

As the Queen uttered this threat, Leicester's better angel called his pride to his aid, and reproached him with the utter extremity of meanness which would overwhelm him for ever, if he stooped to take shelter under the generous interposition of his wife, and abandoned  
10 her, in return for her kindness, to the resentment of the Queen. He had already raised his head, with the dignity of a man of honour, to avow his marriage, and proclaim himself the protector of his Countess, when Varney, born, as it appeared, to be his master's evil genius, rushed into the presence, with every mark of disorder on his face and apparel.

"What means this saucy intrusion?" said Elizabeth.

Varney, with the air of a man altogether overwhelmed with grief and confusion, prostrated himself before her  
20 feet, exclaiming, "Pardon, my Liege, pardon!—or at least let your justice avenge itself on me, where it is due; but spare my noble, my generous, my innocent patron and master!"

Amy, who was yet kneeling, started up as she saw the man whom she deemed most odious place himself so near her, and was about to fly towards Leicester, when, checked at once by the uncertainty and even timidity which his looks had reassumed as soon as the appearance of his confidant seemed to open a new scene, she hung  
30 back, and, uttering a faint scream, besought of her Majesty to cause her to be imprisoned in the lowest dungeon of the Castle—to deal with her as the worst of criminals—"but spare," she exclaimed, "my sight and

hearing, what will destroy the little judgment I have left—the sight of that unutterable and most shameless villain ! ”

“ And why, sweetheart ? ” said the Queen, moved by a new impulse ; “ what hath he, this false knight, since such thou accountest him, done to thee ? ”

“ Oh, worse than sorrow, madam, and worse than injury—he has sown dissension where most there should be peace. I shall go mad if I look longer on him ! ”

“ Beshrew me, but I think thou art distraught <sup>10</sup> already,” answered the Queen —“ My Lord Hunsdon, look to this poor distressed young woman, and let her be safely bestowed, and in honest keeping, till we require her to be forthcoming.”

Two or three of the ladies in attendance, either moved by compassion for a creature so interesting, or by some other motive, offered their service to look after her ; but the Queen briefly answered, “ Ladies, under favour, no.—You have all (give God thanks) sharp ears and nimble tongues—our kinsman Hunsdon has ears of the <sup>20</sup> dullest, and a tongue somewhat rough, but yet of the slowest.—Hunsdon, look to it that none have speech with her.”

“ By Our Lady ! ” said Hunsdon, taking in his strong sinewy arms the fading and almost swooning form of Amy, “ she is a lovely child ; and though a rough nurse, your Grace hath given her a kind one. She is safe with me as one of my own ladybirds of daughters.”

So saying, he carried her off, unresistingly and almost unconsciously ; his war-worn locks and long grey beard <sup>30</sup> mingling with her light-brown tresses, as her head reclined on his strong square shoulder. The Queen followed him with her eye—she had already, with that self-command

which forms so necessary a part of a Sovereign's accomplishments, suppressed every appearance of agitation, and seemed as if she desired to banish all traces of her burst of passion from the recollection of those who had witnessed it. "My Lord of Hunsdon says well," she observed, "he is indeed but a rough nurse for so tender a babe "

Leicester's looks had followed, with late and rueful repentance, the faded form which Hunsdon had just borne from the presence ; they now reposed gloomily on the ground, but more—so at least it seemed to Elizabeth—with the expression of one who has received an unjust affront, than of him who is conscious of guilt. She turned her face angrily from him, and said to Varney, "Speak, Sir Richard, and explain these riddles—thou hast sense and the use of speech, at least, which elsewhere we look for in vain."

As she said this, she darted another resentful glance towards Leicester, while the wily Varney hastened to tell his own story.

"Your Majesty's piercing eye," he said, "has already detected the cruel malady of my beloved lady ; which, unhappy that I am, I would not suffer to be expressed in the certificate of her physician, seeking to conceal what has now broken out with so much the more scandal "

"She is then distraught ? " said the Queen—"indeed we doubted not of it—her whole demeanour bears it out. I found her moping in a corner of yonder grotto ; and every word she spoke—which indeed I dragged from her as by the rack—she instantly recalled and forswore. But how came she hither ? Why had you her not in safe-keeping ? "

"My gracious Liege," said Varney. "the worthy gentleman under whose charge I left her, Master Anthony Foster, has come hither but now, as fast as man and horse can travel, to show me of her escape, which she managed with the art peculiar to many who are afflicted with this malady. He is at hand for examination."

"Let it be for another time," said the Queen. "But, Sir Richard, we envy you not your domestic felicity; your lady railed on you bitterly, and seemed ready to swoon at beholding you."

"It is the nature of persons in her disorder, so please your Grace," answered Varney, "to be ever most inveterate in their spleen against those whom, in their better moments, they hold nearest and dearest."

"We have heard so, indeed," said Elizabeth, "and give faith to the saying"

"May your Grace then be pleased," said Varney, "to command my unfortunate wife to be delivered into the custody of her friends?" 20

Leicester partly started; but, making a strong effort, he subdued his emotion, while Elizabeth answered sharply, "You are something too hasty, Master Varney; we will have first a report of the lady's health and state of mind from Masters, our own physician, and then determine what shall be thought just. You shall have license, however, to see her, that, if there be any matrimonial quarrel betwixt you—such things we have heard do occur, even betwixt a loving couple—you may make it up, without further scandal to our court, or trouble to ourselves."

Varney bowed low, and made no other answer.

Elizabeth again looked towards Leicester, and said

with a degree of condescension which could only arise out of the most heartfelt interest, "Discord, as the Italian poet says, will find her way into peaceful convents, as well as into the privacy of families ; and we fear our own guards and ushers will hardly exclude her from courts My Lord of Leicester, you are offended with us, and we have right to be offended with you. We will take the lion's part upon us, and be the first to forgive."

Leicester smoothed his brow, as by an effort, but the  
10 trouble was too deep-seated that its placidity should at once return. He said, however, that which fitted the occasion, "that he could not have the happiness of forgiving, because she who commanded him to do so, could commit no injury towards him "

Elizabeth seemed content with this reply, and intimated her pleasure that the sports of the morning should proceed. The bugles sounded—the hounds bayed—the horses pranced—but the courtiers and ladies sought the amusement to which they were summoned  
20 with hearts very different from those which had leaped to the morning's *reveille*. There was doubt, and fear, and expectation on every brow, and surmise and intrigue in every whisper.

## CHAPTER XVII.

It was not till after a long and successful morning's sport, and a prolonged repast which followed the return of the Queen to the Castle, that Leicester at length found himself alone with Varney, from whom he now learned the whole particulars of the Countess's escape, as they had been brought to Kenilworth by Foster, who,

in his terror for the consequences, had himself posted hither with the tidings. As Varney, in his narrative, took especial care to be silent concerning those practices on the Countess's health which had driven her to so desperate a resolution, Leicester, who could only suppose that she had adopted it out of jealous impatience to attain the avowed state and appearance belonging to her rank, was not a little offended at the levity with which his wife had broken his strict commands, and exposed him to the resentment of Elizabeth. 10

"I have given," he said, "to this daughter of an obscure Devonshire gentleman, the proudest name in England. I ask but of her a little patience, ere she launches forth upon the full current of her grandeur, and the infatuated woman will rather hazard her own shipwreck and mine, will rather involve me in a thousand whirlpools, shoals, and quicksands, and compel me to a thousand devices which shame me in mine own eyes, than tarry for a little space longer in the obscurity to which she was born.—So lovely, so delicate, so fond, so faithful—yet to lack in so grave a matter the prudence which one might hope from the veriest fool—it puts me beyond my patience."

"We may post it over yet well enough," said Varney, "if my lady will be but ruled, and take on her the character which the time commands."

"It is but too true, Sir Richard," said Leicester, "there is indeed no other remedy. I have heard her termed thy wife in my presence, without contradiction. She must bear the title until she is far from Kenilworth." 30

"And long afterwards, I trust," said Varney, then instantly added, "For I cannot but hope it will be long after ere she bear the title of Lady Leicester.—I fear me



it may scarce be with safety during the life of this Queen. I will instantly go to the lady myself—She hates me, because I have been earnest with your lordship, as she truly suspects, in opposition to what she terms her rights. I care not for her prejudices—She *shall* listen to me; and I will show her such reasons for yielding to the pressure of the times, that I doubt not to bring back her consent to whatever measures these exigencies may require.”

- 10 “No, Varney,” said Leicester; “I have thought upon what is to be done, and I will myself speak with Amy.”

It was now Varney’s turn to feel, upon his own account, the terrors which he affected to participate solely on account of his patron. “Your lordship will not yourself speak with the lady?”

“It is my fixed purpose,” said Leicester; “fetch me one of the livery-cloaks; I will pass the sentinel as thy servant. Thou art to have free access to her.”

“But, my lord”——

- 20 “I will have no *buts*,” replied Leicester; “it shall be even thus, and not otherwise. Hunsdon sleeps, I think, in Saintlowe’s Tower. We can go thither from these apartments by the private passage, without risk of meeting any one. Or what if I do meet Hunsdon? he is more my friend than enemy, and thick-witted enough to adopt any belief that is thrust on him. Fetch me the cloak instantly.”

Varney had no alternative save obedience. In a few minutes Leicester was muffled in the mantle, pulled his  
30 bonnet over his brows, and followed Varney along the secret passage of the Castle which communicated with Hunsdon’s apartments, in which there was scarce a chance of meeting any inquisitive person, and hardly

light enough for any such to have satisfied their curiosity. They emerged at a door where Lord Hunsdon had, with military precaution, placed a sentinel, who readily admitted Sir Richard Varney and his attendant.

They hastily entered, and shut the door behind them.

"Now, good devil, if there be one," said Varney, within himself, "for once help a votary at a dead pinch, for my boat is amongst the breakers!"

The Countess Amy, with her hair and her garments dishevelled, was seated upon a sort of couch, in an attitude of the deepest affliction, out of which she was startled by the opening of the door. She turned hastily round, and, fixing her eye on Varney, exclaimed "Wretch! art thou come to frame some new plan of villainy!"

Leicester cut short her reproaches by stepping forward, and dropping his cloak, while he said, in a voice rather of authority than of affection, "It is with me, madam, you have to commune, not with Sir Richard Varney."

The change effected on the Countess's look and manner was like magic. "Dudley!" she exclaimed, "Dudley! and art thou come at last?" And with the speed of lightning she flew to her husband, clung around his neck, and, unheeding the presence of Varney, overwhelmed him with caresses, while she bathed his face in a flood of tears; muttering, at the same time, but in broken and disjointed monosyllables, the fondest expressions which Love teaches his votaries.

Leicester, as it seemed to him, had reason to be angry with his lady for transgressing his commands, and thus placing him in the perilous situation in which he had that morning stood. But what displeasure could keep its ground before these testimonies of affection from a being

so lovely, that even the negligence of dress, and the withering effects of fear, grief, and fatigue, which would have impaired the beauty of others, rendered hers but the more interesting ! He received and repaid her caresses with fondness, mingled with melancholy, the last of which she seemed scarcely to observe, until the first transport of her own joy was over ; when, looking anxiously in his face, she asked if he was ill.

“ Not in my body, Amy,” was his answer.

- 10 “ Then I will be well too—O Dudley ! I have been ill !—very ill, since we last met !—for I call not this morning’s horrible vision a meeting. I have been in sickness, in grief, and in danger.—But thou art come, and all is joy, and health, and safety ! ”

“ Alas ! Amy,” said Leicester, “ thou hast undone me ! ”

“ I, my lord ? ” said Amy, her cheek at once losing its transient flush of joy—“ how could I injure that which I love better than myself ? ”

- 20 “ I would not upbraid you, Amy,” replied the Earl ; “ but are you not here contrary to my express commands—and does not your presence here endanger both yourself and me ? ”

“ Does it, does it indeed ? ” she exclaimed, eagerly ; “ then why am I here a moment longer ? O, if you knew by what fears I was urged to quit Cumnor-Place !—but I will say nothing of myself—only that if it might be otherwise, I would not willingly return *thither* ;—yet if it concern your safety ”——

- 30 “ We will think, Amy, of some other retreat,” said Leicester ; “ and you shall go to one of my Northern Castles, under the personage—it will be but needful, I trust, for a very few days—of Varney’s wife.”

"How, my Lord of Leicester!" said the lady, disengaging herself from his embraces; "is it to your wife you give the dishonourable counsel to acknowledge herself the bride of another—and of all men, the bride of that Varney?"

"Madam, I speak it in earnest—Varney is my true and faithful servant, trusted in my deepest secrets. I had better lose my right hand than his service at this moment. You have no cause to scorn him as you do."

"I could assign one, my lord," replied the Countess; 10  
"and I see he shakes even under that assured look of his. But he that is necessary as your right hand to your safety, is free from any accusation of mine. May he be true to you; and that he may be true, trust him not too much or too far. But it is enough to say, that I will not go with him unless by violence, nor would I acknowledge him as my husband, were all"—

"It is a temporary deception, madam," said Leicester, irritated by her opposition, "necessary for both our safeties, endangered by you through female caprice, 20 or the premature desire to seize on a rank to which I gave you title, only under condition that our marriage, for a time, should continue secret. If my proposal disgust you, it is yourself has brought it on both of us. There is no other remedy—you must do what your own impatient folly hath rendered necessary—I command you."

"I cannot put your commands, my lord," said Amy, "in balance with those of honour and conscience. I will not, in this instance, obey you. You may achieve 30 your own dishonour, to which these crooked policies naturally tend, but I will do nought that can blemish mine. How could you again, my lord, acknowledge me

as a pure and chaste matron, worthy to share your fortunes, when, holding that high character, I had strolled the country the acknowledged wife of such a profligate fellow as your servant Varney ? ”

“ My lord,” said Varney interposing, “ my lady is too much prejudiced against me, unhappily, to listen to what I can offer ; yet it may please her better than what she proposes. She has good interest with Master Edmund Tressilian, and could doubtless prevail on him to consent  
10 to be her companion to Lidcote-Hall, and there she might remain in safety until time permitted the development of this mystery.”

Leicester was silent, but stood looking eagerly on Amy, with eyes which seemed suddenly to glow as much with suspicion as displeasure.

The Countess only said, “ Would to God I were in my father’s house! —When I left it, I little thought I was leaving peace of mind and honour behind me.”

Varney proceeded with a tone of deliberation.  
20 “ Doubtless this will make it necessary to take strangers into my lord’s counsels ; but surely the Countess will be warrant for the honour of Master Tressilian, and such of her father’s family ”——

“ Peace, Varney,” said Leicester ; “ by Heaven, I will strike my dagger into thee, if again thou namest Tressilian as a partner of my counsels ! ”

“ And wherefore not ? ” said the Countess ; “ unless they be counsels fitter for such as Varney, than for a man of stainless honour and integrity.—My lord, my  
30 lord, bend no angry brows on me—it is the truth, and it is I who speak it. I once did Tressilian wrong for your sake—I will not do him the further injustice of being silent when his honour is brought in question. I can

forbear," she said, looking at Varney, "to pull the mask off hypocrisy, but I will not permit virtue to be slandered in my hearing."

There was a dead pause. Leicester stood displeased, yet undetermined, and too conscious of the weakness of his cause; while Varney, with a deep and hypocritical affectation of sorrow, mingled with humility, bent his eyes on the ground.

It was then that the Countess Amy displayed, in the midst of distress and difficulty, the natural energy of character, which would have rendered her, had fate allowed, a distinguished ornament of the rank which she held. She walked up to Leicester with a composed step, a dignified air, and looks in which strong affection essayed in vain to shake the firmness of conscious truth and rectitude of principle. "You have spoke your mind, my lord," she said, "in these difficulties, with which, unhappily, I have found myself unable to comply. This gentleman—this person, I would say—has hinted at another scheme, to which I object not but as it displeases you. Will your lordship be pleased to hear what a young and timid woman, but your most affectionate wife, can suggest in the present extremity?"

Leicester was silent, but bent his head towards the Countess, as an intimation that she was at liberty to proceed.

"There hath been but one cause for all these evils, my lord," she proceeded, "and it resolves itself into the mysterious duplicity with which you have been induced to surround yourself. Extricate yourself at once, my lord, from the tyranny of these disgraceful trammels. Be like a true English gentleman, knight, and earl, who holds that truth is the foundation of

honour, and that honour is dear to him as the breath of his nostrils. Take your ill-fated wife by the hand, lead her to the footstool of Elizabeth's throne.—Say, that in a moment of infatuation, moved by supposed beauty, of which none perhaps can now trace even the remains, I gave my hand to this Amy Robsart.—You will then have done justice to me, my lord, and to your own honour; and should law or power require you to part from me, I will oppose no objection—since I may  
10 then with honour hide a grieved and broken heart in those shades from which your love withdrew me—Then—have but a little patience, and Amy's life will not long darken your brighter prospects.”

There was so much of dignity, so much of tenderness, in the Countess's remonstrance, that it moved all that was noble and generous in the soul of her husband. The scales seemed to fall from his eyes, and the duplicity and tergiversation of which he had been guilty stung him at once with remorse and shame.

20 “I am not worthy of you, Amy,” he said, “that could weigh aught which ambition has to give against such a heart as thine! I have a bitter penance to perform, in disentangling, before sneering foes and astounded friends, all the meshes of my own deceitful policy.—And the Queen—but let her take my head, as she has threatened.”

“Your head, my lord!” said the Countess; “because you used the freedom and liberty of an English subject in choosing a wife? For shame; it is this distrust of  
30 the Queen's justice, this apprehension of danger, which cannot but be imaginary, that, like scarecrows, have induced you to forsake the straightforward path, which, as it is the best, is also the safest.”



VARNEY, LEICESTER AND AMY.—Drawn by Ad. Lalauze.



“ Ah, Amy, thou little knowest ! ” said Dudley ; but instantly checking himself, he added, “ Yet she shall not find in me a safe or easy victim of arbitrary vengeance.—I have friends—I have allies—I will not, like Norfolk, be dragged to the block, as a victim to sacrifice. Fear not, Amy ; thou shalt see Dudley bear himself worthy of his name. I must instantly communicate with some of those friends on whom I can best rely , for, as things stand, I may be made prisoner in my  
10 own Castle.”

“ O, my good lord,” said Amy, “ make no faction in a peaceful state ! There is no friend can help us so well as our own candid truth and honour. Bring but these to our assistance, and you are safe amidst a whole army of the envious and malignant. Leave these behind you, and all other defence will be fruitless. Truth, my noble lord, is well painted unarmed ”

“ But Wisdom, Amy,” answered Leicester, “ is arrayed in panoply of proof. Argue not with me on  
20 the means I shall use to render my confession—since it must be called so—as safe as may be ; it will be fraught with enough of danger, do what we will —Varney, we must hence.—Farewell, Amy, whom I am to vindicate as mine own, at an expense and risk of which thou alone couldst be worthy ! You shall soon hear farther from me.”

He embraced her fervently, muffled himself as before, and accompanied Varney from the apartment. The latter, as he left the room, bowed low, and, as he raised  
30 his body, regarded Amy with a peculiar expression, as if he desired to know how far his own pardon was included in the reconciliation which had taken place betwixt her and her lord. The Countess looked upon

him with a fixed eye, but seemed no more conscious of his presence, than if there had been nothing but vacant air on the spot where he stood.

“She has brought me to the crisis,” he muttered — “She or I are lost — There was something—I wot not if it was fear or pity—that prompted me to avoid this fatal crisis. It is now decided.—She or I must *perish*.”

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THEY were no sooner in the Earl’s cabinet, than, taking his tablets from his pocket, he began to write, speaking partly to Varney, and partly to himself — “There are 10 many of them close bounden to me, and especially those in good estate and high office ; many who, if they look back towards my benefits, or forward towards the perils which may befall themselves, will not, I think, be disposed to see me stagger unsupported. Let me see—Knollis is sure, and through his means Guernsey and Jersey—Horsey commands in the Isle of Wight—My brother-in-law, Huntingdon, and Pembroke, have authority in Wales.—Through Bedford I lead the Puritans, with their interest, so powerful in all the 20 boroughs.—My brother of Warwick is equal, wellnigh, to myself, in wealth, followers, and dependencies—Sir Owen Hopton is at my devotion ; he commands the Tower of London, and the national treasure deposited there.—My father and grandfather needed never to have stooped their heads to the block, had they thus forecast their enterprises —Why look you so sad, Varney ? I tell thee, a tree so deep-rooted is not easily to be torn up by a tempest.”

"Alas! my lord," said Varney with well-acted passion, and then resumed the same look of despondency which Leicester had before noted

"Alas!" repeated Leicester, "and wherefore alas, Sir Richard? Doth your new spirit of chivalry supply no more vigorous ejaculation, when a noble struggle is impending? Or, if *alas* means thou wilt flinch from the conflict, thou mayst leave the Castle, or go join mine enemies, whichever thou thinkest best."

- 10 "Not so, my lord," answered his confidant; "Varney will be found fighting or dying by your side. Forgive me, if, in love to you, I see more fully than your noble heart permits you to do, the inextricable difficulties with which you are surrounded. You are strong, my lord, and powerful; yet, let me say it without offence, you are so only by the reflected light of the Queen's favour. While you are Elizabeth's favourite, you are all, save in name, like an actual sovereign. But let her call back the honours she has bestowed, and the
- 20 Prophet's gourd did not wither more suddenly. Declare against the Queen, and I do not say that in the wide nation, or in this province alone, you would find yourself instantly deserted and outnumbered; but I will say, that even in this very Castle, and in the midst of your vassals, kinsmen, and dependants, you would be a captive, nay, a sentenced captive, should she please to say the word. Think upon Norfolk, my lord,—upon the powerful Northumberland,—the splendid Westmoreland;—think on all who have made head against this
- 30 sage Princess. They are dead, captive, or fugitive. This is not like other thrones, which can be overturned by a combination of powerful nobles; the broad foundations which support it are in the extended love

and affections of the people You might share it with Elizabeth if you would ; but neither yours, nor any other power, foreign or domestic, will avail to overthrow, or even to shake it."

He paused, and Leicester threw his tablets from him with an air of reckless despite. "It may be as thou say'st," he said, "and, in sooth, I care not whether truth or cowardice dictate thy forebodings. But it shall not be said I fell without a struggle.—Give orders that those of my retainers who served under me in 10 Ireland be gradually drawn into the main Keep, and let our gentlemen and friends stand on their guard, and go armed, as if they expected an onset from the followers of Sussex. Possess the townspeople with some apprehension ; let them take arms, and be ready, at a signal given, to overpower the Pensioners and Yeomen of the Guard "

"Let me remind you, my lord," said Varney, with the same appearance of deep and melancholy interest, "that you have given me orders to prepare for disarming 20 the Queen's guard. It is an act of high treason, but you shall nevertheless be obeyed."

"I care not," said Leicester, desperately ;—"I care not. Shame is behind me, Ruin before me ; I must on."

Here there was another pause, which Varney at length broke with the following words : "It is come to the point I have long dreaded. I must either witness, like an ungrateful beast, the downfall of the best and kindest of masters, or I must speak what I would have 30 buried in the deepest oblivion, or told by any other mouth than mine."

"What is that thou sayst, or wouldst say ? " replied

the Earl ; “ we have no time to waste on words, when the time calls us to action ”

“ My speech is soon made, my lord—would to God it were as soon answered ! Your marriage is the sole cause of the threatened breach with your Sovereign, my lord, is it not ? ”

“ Thou knowest it is ! ” replied Leicester. “ What needs so fruitless a question ? ”

“ Pardon me, my lord,” said Varney, “ the use lies  
10 here Men will wager their lands and lives in defence of a rich diamond, my lord ; but were it not first prudent to look if there is no flaw in it ? ”

“ What means this ? ” said Leicester, with eyes sternly fixed on his dependant, “ and of whom dost thou dare to speak ? ”

“ It is—of the Countess Amy, my lord, of whom I am unhappily bound to speak ; and of whom I *will* speak, were your lordship to kill me for my zeal.”

“ Thou mayst happen to deserve it at my hand,” said  
20 the Earl ; “ but speak on, I will hear thee.”

“ Nay, then, my lord, I will be bold. I speak for my own life as well as for your lordship’s. I like not this lady’s tampering and trickstering with this same Edmund Tressilian. You know him, my lord You know he had formerly an interest in her, which it cost your lordship some pains to supersede. You know the eagerness with which he has pressed on the suit against me in behalf of this lady, the open object of which is to drive your lordship to an avowal of what I must ever call your most  
30 unhappy marriage, the point to which my lady also is willing, at any risk, to urge you.”

Leicester smiled constrainedly “ Thou meanest well, good Sir Richard, and wouldst, I think, sacrifice thine

own honour, as well as that of any other person, to save me from what thou think'st a step so terrible. But, remember,"—he spoke these words with the most stern decision,—“you speak of the Countess of Leicester.”

“I do, my lord,” said Varney. “but it is for the welfare of the Earl of Leicester. My tale is but begun. I do most strongly believe that this Tressilian has, from the beginning of his moving in her cause, been in connivance with her ladyship the Countess.”

“Thou speak'st wild madness, Varney, with the 10 sober face of a preacher. Where, or how, could they communicate together?”

“My lord,” said Varney, “unfortunately I can show that but too well. It was just before the supplication was presented to the Queen, in Tressilian's name, that I met him, to my utter astonishment, at the postern-gate, which leads from the demesne at Cumnor-Place.”

“Thou met'st him, villain! and why didst thou not strike him dead?” exclaimed Leicester.

“I drew on him, my lord, and he on me; and had not 20 my foot slipped, he would not, perhaps, have been again a stumbling-block in your lordship's path.”

Leicester seemed struck dumb with surprise. At length he answered, “What other evidence hast thou of this, Varney, save thine own assertion?—for, as I will punish deeply, I will examine coolly and warily. Sacred Heaven! but no—I will examine coldly and warily—coldly and warily.” He repeated these words more than once to himself, as if in the very sound there was a sedative quality; and again compressing his lips, as 30 if he feared some violent expression might escape from them, he asked again, “What farther proof?”

“Enough, my lord,” said Varney, “and to spare. I

would it rested with me alone, for with me it might have been silenced for ever. But my servant, Michael Lambourne, witnessed the whole, and was, indeed, the means of first introducing Tressilian into Cumnor-Place ; and therefore I took him into my service, and retained him in it, though something of a debauched fellow, that I might have his tongue always under my own command." He then acquainted Lord Leicester how easy it was to prove the circumstance of their interview true, by  
 10 evidence of Anthony Foster, with the corroborative testimonies of the various persons at Cumnor, who had heard the wager laid, and had seen Lambourne and Tressilian set off together. In the whole narrative, Varney hazarded nothing fabulous, excepting that, not indeed by direct assertion, but by inference, he led his patron to suppose that the interview betwixt Amy and Tressilian at Cumnor-Place had been longer than the few minutes to which it was in reality limited.

"And wherefore was I not told of all this?" said  
 20 Leicester sternly. "Why did all of ye—and in particular thou, Varney—keep back from me such material information?"

"Because, my lord," replied Varney, "the Countess pretended to Foster and to me, that Tressilian had intruded himself upon her, and I concluded their interview had been in all honour, and that she would at her own time tell it to your lordship."

"You are but too ready to receive evil surmises, Sir Richard," replied his patron "How know'st thou  
 30 that this interview was not in all honour, as thou hast said? Methinks the wife of the Earl of Leicester might speak for a short time with such a person as Tressilian, without injury to me, or suspicion to herself."

“Questionless, my lord,” answered Varney; “had I thought otherwise, I had been no keeper of the secret. But here lies the rub—Tressilian leaves not the place without establishing a correspondence with a poor man, the landlord of an inn in Cumnor, for the purpose of carrying off the lady. He sent down an emissary of his, whom I trust soon to have in right sure keeping under Mervyn’s Tower. The host is rewarded with a ring for keeping counsel—your lordship may have noted it on Tressilian’s hand—here it is. This fellow, this 10 agent, makes his way to the Place as a pedlar, holds conferences with the lady, and they make their escape together by night—rob a poor fellow of a horse by the way, such was their guilty haste; and at length reach this Castle, where the Countess of Leicester finds refuge—I dare not say in what place.”

“Speak, I command thee,” said Leicester; “speak, while I retain sense enough to hear thee.”

“Since it must be so,” answered Varney, “the lady resorted immediately to the apartment of Tressilian, 20 where she remained many hours, partly in company with him, and partly alone. I told you Tressilian had a paramour in his chamber—I little dreamed that paramour was”——

“Amy, thou wouldst say,” answered Leicester; “but it is false, false as the smoke of hell! Ambitious she may be—fickle and impatient—’tis a woman’s fault; but false to me!—never, never.—The proof—the proof of this!” he exclaimed, hastily.

“Carrol, the Deputy Marshal, ushered her thither by 30 her own desire, on yesterday afternoon—Lambourne and the Warder both found her there at an early hour this morning.”



“ Was Tressilian there with her ? ” said Leicester, in the same hurried tone.

“ No, my lord You may remember,” answered Varney, “ that he was that night placed with Sir Nicholas Blount, under a species of arrest ”

“ Did Carrol, or the other fellows, know who she was ? ” demanded Leicester

“ No, my lord,” replied Varney ; “ Carrol and the Warder had never seen the Countess, and Lambourne  
10 knew her not in her disguise ; but, in seeking to prevent her leaving the cell, he obtained possession of one of her gloves, which, I think, your lordship may know.”

He gave the glove, which had the Bear and Ragged Staff, the Earl’s impress, embroidered upon it in seed-pearls.

“ I do, I do recognise it,” said Leicester. “ They were my own gift. The fellow of it was on the arm which she threw this very day around my neck ! ”—He spoke this with violent agitation.

20 “ Your lordship,” said Varney, “ might yet further enquire of the lady herself, respecting the truth of these passages.”

“ It needs not—it needs not,” said the tortured Earl ; “ it is written in characters of burning light, as if they were branded on my very eyeballs ! I see her infamy—I can see nought else ; and,—gracious Heaven !—for this vile woman was I about to commit to danger the lives of so many noble friends—shake the foundation of a lawful throne—carry the sword and torch through  
30 the bosom of a peaceful land—wrong the kind mistress who made me what I am—and would, but for that hell-framed marriage, have made me all that man can be ! All this I was ready to do for a woman who trinkets and

traffics with my worst foes !—And thou, villain, why didst thou not speak sooner ? ”

“ My lord,” said Varney, “ a tear from my lady would have blotted out all I could have said. Besides, I had not these proofs until this very morning, when Anthony Foster’s sudden arrival, with the examinations and declarations, which he had extorted from the innkeeper Gosling, and others, explained the manner of her flight from Cumnor-Place, and my own researches discovered the steps which she had taken here ”

10

“ Now, may God be praised for the light he has given ! so full, so satisfactory, that there breathes not a man in England who shall call my proceeding rash, or my revenge unjust.—And yet, Varney, so young, so fair, so fawning, and so false ! Hence, then, her hatred to thee, my trusty, my well-beloved servant, because you withstood her plots, and endangered her paramour’s life ! ”

“ I never gave her any other cause of dislike, my lord,” replied Varney, “ but she knew that my counsels went directly to diminish her influence with your lordship ; and that I was, and have been, ever ready to peril my life against your enemies ”

“ It is too, too apparent,” replied Leicester ; “ yet, with what an air of magnanimity she exhorted me to commit my head to the Queen’s mercy, rather than wear the veil of falsehood a moment longer ! Methinks the angel of truth himself can have no such tones of high-souled impulse. Can it be so, Varney ?—Can falsehood use thus boldly the language of truth ?—Can infamy thus assume the guise of purity ?—Varney, thou hast been my servant from a child—I have raised thee high—can raise thee higher. Think, think for me ! Thy brain was ever shrewd and piercing.—May she not

be innocent ? Prove her so, and all I have yet done for thee shall be as nothing—nothing—in comparison of thy recompense ! ”

The agony with which his master spoke had some effect even on the hardened Varney, who, in the midst of his own wicked and ambitious designs, really loved his patron as well as such a wretch was capable of loving any thing ; but he comforted himself, and subdued his self-reproaches, with the reflection, that if  
10 he inflicted upon the Earl some immediate and transitory pain, it was in order to pave his way to the throne, which, were this marriage dissolved by death or otherwise, he deemed Elizabeth would willingly share with his benefactor. He therefore persevered in his diabolical policy , and, after a moment’s consideration, answered the anxious queries of the Earl with a melancholy look, as if he had in vain sought some exculpation for the Countess ; then, suddenly raising his head, he said, with an expression of hope, which instantly com-  
20 municated itself to the countenance of his patron,—  
“ Yet wherefore, if guilty, should she have perilled herself by coming hither ? Why not rather have fled to her father’s, or elsewhere ?—though that, indeed, might have interfered with her desire to be acknowledged as Countess of Leicester ”

“ True, true, true ! ” exclaimed Leicester, his transient gleam of hope giving way to the utmost bitterness of feeling and expression ; “ thou art not fit to fathom a woman’s depth of wit, Varney. I see it all. If in my  
30 madness I had started into rebellion, or if the angry Queen had taken my head, as she this morning threatened, the wealthy dower which law would have assigned to the Countess Dowager of Leicester, had

been no bad windfall to the beggarly Tressilian. Well might she goad me on to danger which could not end otherwise than profitably to her.—Speak not for her, Varney ! I will have her blood ! ”

“ My lord,” replied Varney, “ the wildness of your distress breaks forth in the wildness of your language ”

“ I say, speak not for her ! ” replied Leicester ; “ she has dishonoured me—she would have murdered me—all ties are burst between us. She shall die the death of a traitress and adulteress, well merited both by the laws 10 of God and man ! ”

## CHAPTER XIX.

It was afterwards remembered, that during the banquets and revels which occupied the remainder of this eventful day, the bearing of Leicester and of Varney were totally different from their usual demeanour. Sir Richard Varney had been held rather a man of counsel and of action, than a votary of pleasure. But upon the present day his character seemed changed. He mixed among the younger courtiers and ladies, and appeared for the moment to be actuated by a spirit of light- 20 hearted gaiety. Those who had looked upon him as a man given up to graver and more ambitious pursuits, now perceived with astonishment that his wit could carry as smooth an edge as their own, his laugh be as lively, and his brow as unclouded.

It was entirely different with Leicester. However habituated his mind usually was to play the part of a good courtier, and appear gay, assiduous, and free from all care but that of enhancing the pleasure of the moment,

while his bosom internally throbbed with the pangs of unsatisfied ambition, jealousy, or resentment, his heart had now a yet more dreadful guest, whose workings could not be overshadowed or suppressed, and you might read in his vacant eye and troubled brow, that his thoughts were far absent from the scenes in which he was compelling himself to play a part. His actions and gestures, instead of appearing the consequence of simple volition, seemed, like those of an automaton, to  
10 wait the revolution of some internal machinery ere they could be performed, and his words fell from him piecemeal, interrupted, as if he had first to think what he was to say, then how it was to be said, and as if, after all, it was only by an effort of continued attention that he completed a sentence without forgetting both the one and the other.

The singular effects which these distractions of mind produced upon the behaviour and conversation of the most accomplished courtier of England, as they were  
20 visible to the lowest and dullest menial who approached his person, could not escape the notice of the most intelligent princess of the age. Nor is there the least doubt, that the alternate negligence and irregularity of his manner would have called down Elizabeth's severe displeasure on the Earl of Leicester, had it not occurred to her to account for it, by supposing that the apprehension of that displeasure which she had expressed towards him with such vivacity that very morning, was dwelling upon the spirits of her favourite. When this  
30 idea, so flattering to female vanity, had once obtained possession of her mind, it proved a full and satisfactory apology for the numerous errors and mistakes of the Earl of Leicester; and the watchful circle around

observed with astonishment, that, instead of resenting his repeated negligence, and want of even ordinary attention, (although these were points on which she was usually extremely punctilious,) the Queen sought, on the contrary, to afford him time and means to recollect himself, and deigned to assist him in doing so, with an indulgence which seemed altogether inconsistent with her usual character. It was clear, however, that this could not last much longer, and that Elizabeth must finally put another and more severe construction on 10 Leicester's uncourteous conduct, when the Earl was summoned by Varney to speak with him in a different apartment.

After having had the message twice delivered to him, he rose, and was about to withdraw, as it were, by instinct—then stopped, and turning round, entreated permission of the Queen to absent himself for a brief space upon matters of pressing importance.

“Go, my lord,” said the Queen, “we are aware our presence must occasion sudden and unexpected occur- 20 rences, which require to be provided for on the instant. Yet, my lord, as you would have us believe ourself your welcome and honoured guest, we entreat you to think less of our good cheer, and favour us with more of your good countenance, than we have this day enjoyed; for, whether prince or peasant be the guest, the welcome of the host will always be the better part of the entertainment. Go, my lord; and we trust to see you return with an unwrinkled brow, and those free thoughts which you are wont to have at the disposal of your 30 friends.”

Leicester only bowed low in answer to this rebuke, and retired. At the door of the apartment he was met

by Varney, who eagerly drew him apart, and whispered in his ear, "All is well!"

"Has Masters seen her?" said the Earl.

"He has, my lord, and as she would neither answer his queries, nor allege any reason for her refusal, he will give full testimony that she labours under a mental disorder, and may be best committed to the charge of her friends. The opportunity is therefore free, to remove her as we proposed."

10 "But Tressilian?" said Leicester.

"He will not know of her departure for some time," replied Varney: "it shall take place this very evening, and to-morrow he shall be cared for."

"No, by my soul," answered Leicester; "I will take vengeance on him with mine own hand!"

"You, my lord, and on so inconsiderable a man as Tressilian!—No, my lord, he hath long wished to visit foreign parts. Trust him to me—I will take care he returns not hither to tell tales."

20 "Not so, by Heaven, Varney!" exclaimed Leicester.

—"Inconsiderable do you call an enemy, that hath had power to wound me so deeply, that my whole after life must be one scene of remorse and misery?—No; rather than forego the right of doing myself justice with my own hand on that accursed villain, I will unfold the whole truth at Elizabeth's footstool, and let her vengeance descend at once on them and on myself."

Varney saw with great alarm that his lord was wrought up to such a pitch of agitation, that if he gave not way 30 to him, he was perfectly capable of adopting the desperate resolution which he had announced, and which was instant ruin to all the schemes of ambition which Varney had formed for his patron and for himself. But the

Earl's rage seemed at once uncontrollable and deeply concentrated ; and while he spoke, his eyes shot fire, his voice trembled with excess of passion, and the light foam stood on his lip.

His confidant made a bold and successful effort to obtain the mastery of him even in this hour of emotion. —“ My lord,” he said, leading him to a mirror, “ behold your reflection in that glass, and think if these agitated features belong to one who, in a condition so extreme, is capable of forming a resolution for himself.” 10

“ What, then, wouldst thou make me ? ” said Leicester, struck at the change in his own physiognomy, though offended at the freedom with which Varney made the appeal. “ Am I to be thy ward, thy vassal, —the property and subject of my servant ? ”

“ No, my lord,” said Varney, firmly, “ but be master of yourself, and of your own passion. My lord, I, your born servant, am shamed to see how poorly you bear yourself in the storm of fury. Go to Elizabeth's feet, confess your marriage.—Go, my lord—but first take 20 farewell of Richard Varney, with all the benefits you ever conferred on him. He served the noble, the lofty, the high-minded Leicester, and was more proud of depending on him, than he would be of commanding thousands. But the abject lord who stoops to every adverse circumstance, whose judicious resolves are scattered like chaff before every wind of passion, him Richard Varney serves not. He is as much above him in constancy of mind, as beneath him in rank and fortune.”

Varney spoke thus without hypocrisy, for, though the 30 firmness of mind which he boasted was hardness and impenetrability, yet he really felt the ascendancy which he vaunted ; while the interest which he actually felt



in the fortunes of Leicester, gave unusual emotion to his voice and manner.

Leicester was overpowered by his assumed superiority ; it seemed to the unfortunate Earl as if his last friend was about to abandon him. He stretched his hand towards Varney, as he uttered the words, " Do not leave me — What wouldst thou have me do ? "

" Be thyself, my noble master," said Varney, touching the Earl's hand with his lips, after having respectfully  
10 grasped it in his own ; " be yourself, superior to those storms of passion which wreck inferior minds. Are you the first who has been cozened in love ? The first whom a vain and licentious woman has cheated into an affection, which she has afterwards scorned and misused ? Let your strong resolve of this morning, which I have both courage, zeal, and means enough to execute, be like the fiat of a superior being, a passionless act of justice. She has deserved death—let her die ! "

While he was speaking, the Earl held his hand fast,  
20 compressed his lips hard, and frowned, as if he laboured to catch from Varney a portion of the cold, ruthless, and dispassionate firmness which he recommended. When he was silent, the Earl still continued to grasp his hand, until, with an effort at calm decision, he was able to articulate, " Be it so—she dies !—But one tear might be permitted."

" Not one, my lord," interrupted Varney, who saw by the quivering eye and convulsed cheek of his patron, that he was about to give way to a burst of emotion,—  
30 a tear—the time permits it not.—Tressilian must be thought of"—

" That indeed is a name," said the Earl, " to convert tears into blood. Varney, I have thought on this, and

I have determined—neither entreaty nor argument shall move me—Tressilian shall be my own victim.”

“It is madness, my lord ; but you are too mighty for me to bar your way to your revenge. Yet resolve at least to choose fitting time and opportunity, and to forbear him until those shall be found.”

“Thou shalt order me in what thou wilt,” said Leicester, “only thwart me not in this.”

“Then, my lord,” said Varney, “I first request of you to lay aside the wild, suspected, and half-frenzied 10 demeanour, which hath this day drawn the eyes of all the court upon you, and which, but for the Queen’s partial indulgence, which she hath extended towards you in a degree far beyond her nature, she had never given you the opportunity to atone for.”

“Have I indeed been so negligent ?” said Leicester, as one who awakes from a dream ; “I thought I had coloured it well ; but fear nothing, my mind is now eased—I am calm. My horoscope shall be fulfilled ; and that it may be fulfilled, I will tax to the highest 20 every faculty of my mind. Fear me not, I say—I will to the Queen instantly—not thine own looks and language shall be more impenetrable than mine.—Hast thou ought else to say ?”

“I must crave your signet-ring,” said Varney, gravely, “in token to those of your servants whom I must employ, that I possess your full authority in commanding their aid.”

Leicester drew off the signet-ring, which he commonly used, and gave it to Varney with a haggard and stern 30 expression of countenance, adding only, in a low, half-whispered tone, but with terrific emphasis, the words, “What thou dost, do quickly.”

Some anxiety and wonder took place, meanwhile, in the presence-hall, at the prolonged absence of the noble Lord of the Castle, and great was the delight of his friends, when they saw him enter as a man, from whose bosom, to all human seeming, a weight of care had been just removed. Amply did Leicester that day redeem the pledge he had given to Varney, who soon saw himself no longer under the necessity of maintaining a character so different from his own, as that which he had assumed in  
10 the earlier part of the day, and gradually relapsed into the same grave, shrewd, caustic observer of conversation and incident, which constituted his usual part in society.

With Elizabeth, Leicester played his game as one to whom her natural strength of talent, and her weakness in one or two particular points, were well known. He was too wary to exchange on a sudden the sullen personage which he had played before he retired with Varney ; but, on approaching her, it seemed softened into a melancholy, which had a touch of tenderness in  
20 it, and which, in the course of conversing with Elizabeth, and as she dropped in compassion one mark of favour after another to console him, passed into a flow of affectionate gallantry, the most assiduous, the most delicate, the most insinuating, yet at the same time the most respectful, with which a Queen was ever addressed by a subject. Elizabeth listened, as in a sort of enchantment ; her jealousy of power was lulled asleep ; her resolution to forsake all social or domestic ties, and dedicate herself exclusively to the care of her people,  
30 began to be shaken, and once more the star of Dudley culminated in the court-horizon.

But Leicester did not enjoy this triumph over nature, and over conscience, without its being embittered to

him, not only by the internal rebellion of his feelings against the violence which he exercised over them, but by many accidental circumstances, which, in the course of the banquet, and during the subsequent amusements of the evening, jarred upon that nerve, the least vibration of which was agony.

The courtiers were, for example, in the great hall, after having left the banqueting-room. awaiting the appearance of a splendid masque, which was the expected entertainment of this evening, when the Queen interrupted a wild career of wit, which the Earl of Leicester was running against Lord Willoughby, Raleigh, and some other courtiers, by saying—"We will impeach you of high treason, my lord, if you proceed in this attempt to slay us with laughter. And here comes a thing may make us all grave at his pleasure, our learned physician, Masters, with news belike of our poor suppliant, Lady Varney—nay, my lord, we will not have you leave us, for this being a dispute betwixt married persons, we do not hold our own experience deep enough to decide thereon, without good counsel—How now, Masters, what think'st thou of the run-away bride?"

The smile with which Leicester had been speaking, when the Queen interrupted him, remained arrested on his lips, as if it had been carved there by the chisel of Michael Angelo, or of Chantrey; and he listened to the speech of the physician with the same immovable cast of countenance.

"The Lady Varney, gracious Sovereign," said the 30 court physician, Masters, "is sullen, and would hold little conference with me touching the state of her health, talking wildly of being soon to plead her own cause before

your own presence, and of answering no meaner person's enquiries."

"Now the heavens forefend!" said the Queen; "we have already suffered from the misconstructions and brouls which seem to follow this poor brain-sick lady wherever she comes—Think you not so, my lord?" she added, appealing to Leicester, with something in her look that indicated regret, even tenderly expressed, for their disagreement of that morning. Leicester  
10 compelled himself to bow low. The utmost force he could exert was inadequate to the farther effort of expressing in words his acquiescence in the Queen's sentiment.

"You are vindictive," she said, "my lord; but we will find time and place to punish you. But once more to this same trouble-mirth, this Lady Varney.—What of her health, Masters?"

"She is sullen, madam, as I already said," replied Masters, "and refuses to answer interrogatories, or be  
20 amenable to the authority of the mediciner. I think she were best cared for by her husband in his own house, and removed from all this bustle of pageants, which disturbs her weak brain with the most fantastic phantoms. She drops hints as if she were some great person in disguise—some Countess or Princess perchance. God help them, such are often the hallucinations of these infirm persons!"

"Nay, then," said the Queen, "away with her with all speed. Let Varney care for her with fitting humanity;  
30 but let them rid the Castle of her forthwith. She will think herself lady of all, I warrant you. It is a pity so fair a form, however, should have an infirm understanding.—What think you, my lord?"

"It is pity indeed," said the Earl, repeating the words like a task which was set him.

"But, perhaps," said Elizabeth, "you do not join with us in our opinion of her beauty ; and indeed we have known men prefer a statelier and more Juno-like form to that drooping fragile one, that hung its head like a broken lily. Ay, men are tyrants, my lord, who esteem the animation of the strife above the triumph of an unresisting conquest, and, like sturdy champions, love best those women who can wage contest with them. 10  
—I could think with you, Rutland, that, give my Lord of Leicester such a piece of painted wax for a bride, he would have wished her dead ere the end of the honeymoon."

As she said this, she looked on Leicester so expressively, that, while his heart revolted against the egregious falsehood, he did himself so much violence as to reply in a whisper, that Leicester's love was more lowly than her Majesty deemed, since it was settled where he could never command, but must ever obey. 20

The Queen blushed, and bid him be silent ; yet looked as if she expected that he would not obey her commands. But at that moment the flourish of trumpets and kettle-drums from a high balcony which overlooked the hall, announced the entrance of the masquers, and relieved Leicester from the horrible state of constraint and dissimulation in which the result of his own duplicity had placed him.

The masque which entered consisted of four separate bands, which followed each other at brief intervals, each 30 consisting of six principal persons and as many torch-bearers, and each representing one of the various nations by which England had at different times been occupied.

Merlin having entered, and advanced into the midst of the hall, summoned the presenters of the contending bands around him by a wave of his magical rod, and announced to them, in a poetical speech, that the isle of Britain was now commanded by a Royal Maiden, to whom it was the will of fate that they should all do homage, and request of her to pronounce on the various pretensions which each set forth to be esteemed the pre-eminent stock, from which the present natives, 10 the happy subjects of that angelical Princess, derived their lineage.

The bands, each moving to solemn music, passed in succession before Elizabeth ; doing her, as they passed, each after the fashion of the people whom they represented, the lowest and most devotional homage, which she returned with the same gracious courtesy that had marked her whole conduct since she came to Kenilworth.

The presenters of the several masques, or quadrilles, then alleged, each in behalf of his own troop, the reasons 20 which they had for claiming pre-eminence over the rest ; and when they had been all heard in turn, she returned them this gracious answer : “ That she was sorry she was not better qualified to decide upon the doubtful question which had been propounded to her by the direction of the famous Merlin, but that it seemed to her that no single one of these celebrated nations could claim pre-eminence over the others, as having most contributed to form the Englishman of her own time, who unquestionably derived from each of them some 30 worthy attribute of his character. Thus,” she said, “ the Englishman had from the ancient Briton his bold and tameless spirit of freedom,—from the Roman his disciplined courage in war, with his love of letters and

civilisation in time of peace,—from the Saxon his wise and equitable laws,—and from the chivalrous Norman his love of honour and courtesy, with his generous desire for glory.”

Merlin answered with readiness, that it did indeed require that so many choice qualities should meet in the English, as might render them in some measure the muster of the perfections of other nations, since that alone could render them in some degree deserving of the blessings they enjoyed under the reign of England’s Elizabeth. 10

The music then sounded, and the quadrilles had begun to remove from the crowded hall, when Leicester, who was stationed for the moment near the bottom of the hall, felt himself pulled by the cloak, while a voice whispered in his ear, “My Lord, I do desire some instant conference with you.”

## CHAPTER XX.

“I DESIRE some conference with you.” The words were simple in themselves, but Lord Leicester was in that alarmed and feverish state of mind, when the most ordinary occurrences seem fraught with alarming import ; 20 and he turned hastily round to survey the person by whom they had been spoken. There was nothing remarkable in the speaker’s appearance, which consisted of a black silk doublet and short mantle, with a black vizard on his face ; for it appeared he had been among the crowd of masks who had thronged into the hall in the retinue of Merlin, though he did not wear any of the extravagant disguises by which most of them were distinguished.



“ Who are you, or what do you want with me ? ” said Leicester, not without betraying, by his accents, the hurried state of his spirits.

“ No evil, my lord,” answered the mask, “ but much good and honour, if you will rightly understand my purpose. But I must speak with you more privately ”

“ I can speak with no nameless stranger,” answered Leicester, dreading he knew not precisely what from the request of the stranger, “ and those who are known to  
10 me, must seek another and a fitter time to ask an interview.”

He would have hurried away, but the mask still detained him.

“ Those who talk to your lordship of what your own honour demands, have a right over your time, whatever occupations you may lay aside in order to indulge them.”

“ How ! my honour ? Who dare impeach it ? ” said Leicester.

“ Your own conduct alone can furnish grounds for  
20 accusing it, my lord, and it is that topic on which I would speak with you.”

“ You are insolent,” said Leicester, “ and abuse the hospitable license of the time, which prevents me from having you punished I demand your name ? ”

“ Edmund Tressilian of Cornwall,” answered the mask. “ My tongue has been bound by a promise for four-and-twenty hours,—the space is passed,—I now speak, and do your lordship the justice to address myself first to you.”

30 The thrill of astonishment which had penetrated to Leicester’s very heart at hearing that name pronounced by the voice of the man he most detested, and by whom he conceived himself so deeply injured, at first rendered

him immovable, but instantly gave way to such a thirst for revenge as the pilgrim in the desert feels for the water-brooks. He had but sense and self-government enough left to prevent his stabbing to the heart the audacious villain, who, after the run he had brought upon him, dared, with such unmoved assurance, thus to practise upon him farther. Determined to suppress for the moment every symptom of agitation, in order to perceive the full scope of Tressilian's purpose, as well as to secure his own vengeance, he answered in a tone so altered by restrained passion as scarce to be intelligible,—"And what does Master Edmund Tressilian require at my hand?"

"Justice, my lord," answered Tressilian, calmly but firmly.

"Justice," said Leicester, "all men are entitled to—You, Master Tressilian, are peculiarly so, and be assured you shall have it."

"I expect nothing less from your nobleness," answered Tressilian, "but time presses, and I must speak with you to-night.—May I wait on you in your chamber?"

"No," answered Leicester, sternly, "not under a roof, and that roof mine own.—We will meet under the free cope of heaven."

"You are discomposed or displeased, my lord," replied Tressilian; "yet there is no occasion for dis-temperature. The place is equal to me, so you allow me one half hour of your time uninterrupted."

"A shorter time will, I trust, suffice," answered Leicester—"Meet me in the Pleasance, when the Queen has retired to her chamber."

"Enough," said Tressilian, and withdrew; while a

sort of rapture seemed for the moment to occupy the mind of Leicester.

"Heaven," he said, "is at last favourable to me, and has put within my reach the wretch who has branded me with this deep ignominy—who has inflicted on me this cruel agony. I will blame fate no more, since I am afforded the means of tracing the wiles by which he means still farther to practise on me, and then of at once convicting and punishing his villainy. To my task  
10 —to my task!—I will not sink under it now, since midnight, at farthest, will bring me vengeance"

While these reflections thronged through Leicester's mind, he again made his way amid the obsequious crowd, which divided to give him passage, and resumed his place, envied and admired, beside the person of his Sovereign. But, could the bosom of him thus admired and envied have been laid open before the inhabitants of that crowded hall, with all its dark thoughts of guilty ambition, blighted affection, deep vengeance, and conscious sense of meditated cruelty, crossing each other  
20 like spectres in the circle of some foul enchantress,—which of them, from the most ambitious noble in the courtly circle, down to the most wretched menial, who lived by shifting of trenchers, would have desired to change characters with the favourite of Elizabeth, and the Lord of Kenilworth?

New tortures awaited him as soon as he had rejoined Elizabeth.

"You come in time, my lord," she said, "to decide  
30 a dispute between us ladies. Here has Sir Richard Varney asked our permission to depart from the Castle with his infirm lady, having, as he tells us, your lordship's consent to his absence, so he can obtain ours. Certes,

we have no will to withhold him from the affectionate charge of this poor young person—but you are to know, that Sir Richard Varney hath this day shown himself so much captivated with these ladies of ours, that here is our Duchess of Rutland says, he will carry his poor insane wife no farther than the lake, plunge her in, to tenant the crystal palaces that the enchanted nymph told us of, and return a jolly widower, to dry his tears, and to make up the loss among our train. How say you, my lord?—We have seen Varney under two or three 10 different guises—you know what are his proper attributes—think you he is capable of playing his lady such a knave's trick?”

Leicester was confounded, but the danger was urgent, and a reply absolutely necessary. “The ladies,” he said, “think too lightly of one of their own sex, in supposing she could deserve such a fate, or too ill of ours, to think it could be inflicted upon an innocent female.”

“Hear him, my ladies,” said Elizabeth; “like all 20 his sex, he would excuse their cruelty by imputing fickleness to us.”

“Say not *us*, madam,” replied the Earl; “we say that meaner women, like the lesser lights of heaven, have revolutions and phases, but who shall impute mutability to the sun, or to Elizabeth?”

The discourse presently afterwards assumed a less perilous tendency, and Leicester continued to support his part in it with spirit, at whatever expense of mental agony. So pleasing did it seem to Elizabeth, that the 30 Castle bell had sounded midnight ere she retired from the company, a circumstance unusual in her quiet and regular habits of disposing of time. Her departure was

of course the signal for breaking up the company, who dispersed to their several places of repose, to dream over the pastimes of the day, or to anticipate those of the morrow.

The unfortunate Lord of the Castle, and founder of the proud festival, retired to far different thoughts. His direction to the valet who attended him, was to send Varney instantly to his apartment. The messenger returned after some delay, and informed him that an 10 hour had elapsed since Sir Richard Varney had left the Castle, by the postern-gate, with three other persons, one of whom was transported in a horse-litter.

"How came he to leave the Castle after the watch was set?" said Leicester; "I thought he went not till daybreak."

"He gave satisfactory reasons, as I understand," said the domestic, "to the guard, and, as I hear, showed your lordship's signet"—

"True—true," said the Earl; "yet he has been hasty 20 —Do any of his attendants remain behind?"

"Michael Lambourne, my lord," said the valet, "was not to be found when Sir Richard Varney departed, and his master was much incensed at his absence. I saw him but now saddling his horse to gallop after his master."

"Bid him come hither instantly," said Leicester; "I have a message to his master."

The servant left the apartment, and Leicester traversed it for some time in deep meditation—"Varney is over zealous," he said, "over pressing—He loves me, I think 30 —but he hath his own ends to serve, and he is inexorable in pursuit of them. If I rise he rises, and he hath shown himself already but too eager to rid me of this obstacle which seems to stand betwixt me and sovereignty. Yet

I will not stoop to bear this disgrace. She shall be punished, but it shall be more advisedly. I already feel, even in anticipation, that over-haste would light the flames of hell in my bosom. No—one victim is enough at once, and that victim already waits me.”

He seized upon writing materials, and hastily traced these words :—

“ Sir Richard Varney, we have resolved to defer the matter instructed to your care, and strictly command you to proceed no farther in relation to our Countess, 10 until our farther order. We also command your instant return to Kenilworth, as soon as you have safely bestowed that with which you are intrusted. But if the safe placing of your present charge shall detain you longer than we think for, we command you, in that case, to send back our signet-ring by a trusty and speedy messenger, we having present need of the same. And requiring your strict obedience in these things, and commending you to God’s keeping, we rest your assured good friend and master, •

20

“ R. LEICESTER.

“ Given at our Castle of Kenilworth, the tenth of July, in the year of Salvation one thousand five hundred and seventy-five.”

As Leicester had finished and sealed this mandate, Michael Lambourne, booted up to mid-thigh, having his riding-cloak girthed around him with a broad belt, and a felt-cap on his head, like that of a courier, entered his apartment, ushered in by the valet.

“ What is thy capacity of service ? ” said the Earl. 30

“ Equerry to your lordship’s master of the horse,” answered Lambourne, with his customary assurance.

"Tie up thy saucy tongue, sir," said Leicester; "the jests that may suit Sir Richard Varney's presence, suit not mine. How soon wilt thou overtake thy master?"

"In one hour's riding, my lord, if man and horse hold good," said Lambourne, with an instant alteration in demeanour from an approach to familiarity to the deepest respect. The Earl measured him with his eye from top to toe.

"I have heard of thee," he said; "men say thou art  
10 a prompt fellow in thy service, but too much given to brawling and to wassail to be trusted with things of moment"

"My lord," said Lambourne, "I have been soldier, sailor, traveller, and adventurer; and these are all trades in which men enjoy to-day, because they have no surety of to-morrow. But though I may misuse mine own leisure, I have never neglected the duty I owe my master."

"See that it be so in this instance," said Leicester,  
20 "and it shall do thee good. Deliver this letter speedily and carefully into Sir Richard Varney's hands."

"Does my commission reach no farther?" said Lambourne.

"No," answered Leicester, "but it deeply concerns me that it be carefully as well as hastily executed."

"I will spare neither care nor horse-flesh," answered Lambourne, and immediately took his leave.

"So this is the end of my private audience, from which I hoped so much!" he muttered to himself, as he  
30 went through the long gallery, and down the back staircase. "I thought the Earl had wanted a cast of mine office in some secret intrigue, and it all ends in carrying a letter! Well, his pleasure shall be done, however, and

as his lordship well says, it may do me good another time. The child must creep ere he walk, and so must your infant courtier. I will have a look into this letter, however, which he hath sealed so sloven-like"—Having accomplished this, he clapped his hands together in ecstasy, exclaiming, "The Countess—the Countess!—I have the secret that shall make or mar me—But come forth, Bayard," he added, leading his horse into the court-yard, "for your flanks and my spurs must be presently acquainted "

10

Lambourne mounted, accordingly, and left the Castle by the postern-gate, where his free passage was permitted, in consequence of a message to that effect left by Sir Richard Varney.

## CHAPTER XXI.

As soon as Lambourne and the valet had left the apartment, Leicester proceeded to change his dress for a very plain one, threw his mantle around him, and, taking a lamp in his hand, went by the private passage of communication to a small secret postern-door which opened into the court-yard, near to the entrance of the Pleasance. 20 His reflections were of a more calm and determined character than they had been at any late period, and he endeavoured to claim, even in his own eyes, the character of a man more sinned against than sinning.

"I have suffered the deepest injury," such was the tenor of his meditations, "yet I have restricted the instant revenge which was in my power, and have limited it to that which is manly and noble. But shall the union which this false woman has this day disgraced,



remain an abiding fetter on me, to check me in the noble career to which my destinies invite me ? No—there are other means of disengaging such ties, without unloosing the cords of life. In the sight of God, I am no longer bound by the union she has broken. Kingdoms shall divide us—oceans roll betwixt us, and their waves, whose abysses have swallowed whole navies, shall be the sole depositaries of the deadly mystery ”

In this mood, the vindictive and ambitious Earl  
10 entered the superb precincts of the Pleasance, then illumined by the full moon. The broad yellow light was reflected on all sides from the white freestone, of which the pavement, balustrades, and architectural ornaments of the place, were constructed ; and not a single fleecy cloud was visible in the azure sky, so that the scene was nearly as light as if the sun had but just left the horizon. The numerous statues of white marble glimmered in the pale light, like so many sheeted ghosts just arisen from their sepulchres, and the fountains  
20 threw their jets into the air, as if they sought that their waters should be brightened by the moonbeams, ere they fell down again upon their basins in showers of sparkling silver. The day had been sultry, and the gentle night-breeze, which sighed along the terrace of the Pleasance, raised not a deeper breath than the fan in the hand of youthful beauty. The bird of summer night had built many a nest in the bowers of the adjacent garden, and the tenants now indemnified themselves for silence during the day, by a full chorus of their own  
30 unrivalled warblings, now joyous, now pathetic, now united, now responsive to each other, as if to express their delight in the placid and delicious scene to which they poured their melody.

Musing on matters far different from the fall of waters, the gleam of moonlight, or the song of the nightingale, the stately Leicester walked slowly from the one end of the terrace to the other, his cloak wrapped around him, and his sword under his arm, without seeing any thing resembling the human form.

"I have been fooled by my own generosity," he said, "if I have suffered the villain to escape me"

These were his thoughts, which were instantly dispelled, when, turning to look back towards the entrance, 10 he saw a human form advancing slowly from the portico, and darkening the various objects with its shadow, as passing them successively, in its approach towards him.

"Shall I strike ere I again hear his detested voice?" was Leicester's thought, as he grasped the hilt of the sword. "But no! I will see which way his vile practice tends I will watch, disgusting as it is, the coils and mazes of the loathsome snake, ere I put forth my strength and crush him."

His hand quitted the sword-hilt, and he advanced 20 slowly towards Tressilian, collecting, for their meeting, all the self-possession he could command, until they came front to front with each other.

Tressilian made a profound reverence, to which the Earl replied with a haughty inclination of the head, and the words, "You sought secret conference with me, sir—I am here, and attentive."

"My lord," said Tressilian, "I am so earnest in that which I have to say, and so desirous to find a patient, nay a favourable, hearing, that I will stoop to exculpate 30 myself from whatever might prejudice your lordship against me. You think me your enemy?"

"Have I not some apparent cause?" answered

Leicester, preceiving that Tressilian paused for a reply.

"You do me wrong, my lord. I am a friend, but neither a dependent nor partisan, of the Earl of Sussex, whom courtiers call your rival, and it is some considerable time since I ceased to regard either courts, or court-intrigues, as suited to my temper or genius."

"No doubt, sir," answered Leicester, "there are other occupations more worthy of a scholar, and for  
10 such the world holds Master Tressilian—Love has his intrigues as well as ambition "

"I perceive, my lord," replied Tressilian, "you give much weight to my early attachment for the unfortunate young person of whom I am about to speak, and perhaps think I am prosecuting her cause out of rivalry, more than a sense of justice."

"No matter for my thoughts, sir," said the Earl ;  
"proceed. You have as yet spoken of yourself only ,  
an important and worthy subject doubtless, but which,  
20 perhaps, does not altogether so deeply concern me, that I should postpone my repose to hear it. Spare me farther prelude, sir, and speak to the purpose, if indeed you have aught to say that concerns me. When you have done, I, in my turn, have something to communicate."

"I will speak, then, without farther prelude, my lord," answered Tressilian ; "having to say that which, as it concerns your lordship's honour, I am confident you will not think your time wasted in listening to. I  
30 have to request an account from your lordship of the unhappy Amy Robsart, whose history is too well known to you. I regret deeply that I did not at once take this course, and make yourself judge between me and the

villain by whom she is injured My lord, she extricated herself from an unlawful and most perilous state of confinement, trusting to the effects of her own remonstrance upon her unworthy husband, and extorted from me a promise, that I would not interfere in her behalf until she had used her own efforts to have her rights acknowledged by him ”

“ Ha ! ” said Leicester, “ remember you to whom you speak ? ”

“ I speak of her unworthy husband, my lord,” 10 repeated Tressilian, “ and my respect can find no softer language. The unhappy young woman is withdrawn from my knowledge, and sequestered in some secret place of this Castle,—if she be not transferred to some place of seclusion better fitted for bad designs. This must be reformed, my lord,—I speak it as authorized by her father,—and this ill-fated marriage must be avouched and proved in the Queen’s presence, and the lady placed without restraint, and at her own free disposal. And, permit me to say, it concerns no one’s 20 honour that these most just demands of mine should be complied with, so much as it does that of your lordship.”

The Earl stood as if he had been petrified, at the extreme coldness with which the man, whom he considered as having injured him so deeply, pleaded the cause of his criminal paramour, as if she had been an innocent woman, and he a disinterested advocate ; nor was his wonder lessened by the warmth with which Tressilian seemed to demand for her the rank and situation which she had disgraced, and the advantages 30 of which she was doubtless to share with the lover who advocated her cause with such effrontery. Tressilian had been silent for more than a minute ere the Earl

recovered from the excess of his astonishment; and, considering the prepossessions with which his mind was occupied, there is little wonder that his passion gained the mastery of every other consideration. "I have heard you, Master Tressilian," he said, "without interruption, and I bless God that my ears were never before made to tingle by the words of so frontless a villain. The task of chastising you is fitter for the hangman's scourge than the sword of a nobleman, but yet——Villain, draw and defend thyself!"

As he spoke the last words, he dropped his mantle on the ground, struck Tressilian smartly with his sheathed sword, and instantly drawing his rapier, put himself into a posture of assault. The vehement fury of his language at first filled Tressilian, in his turn, with surprise equal to what Leicester had felt when he addressed him. But astonishment gave rise to resentment, when the unmerited insults of his language were followed by a blow, which immediately put to flight every thought save that  
20 of instant combat. Tressilian's sword was instantly drawn, and though perhaps somewhat inferior to Leicester in the use of the weapon, he understood it well enough to maintain the contest with great spirit, the rather that of the two he was for the time the more cool, since he could not help imputing Leicester's conduct either to actual frenzy, or to the influence of some strong delusion.

The rencontre had continued for several minutes, without either party receiving a wound, when of a  
30 sudden voices were heard beneath the portico, which formed the entrance of the terrace, mingled with the steps of men advancing hastily. "We are interrupted," said Leicester to his antagonist; "follow me."

At the same time a voice from the portico said, "The jackanape is right—they are tilting here."

Leicester, meanwhile, drew off Tressilian into a sort of recess behind one of the fountains, which served to conceal them, while six of the yeomen of the Queen's guard passed along the middle walk of the Pleasance, and they could hear one say to the rest, 'We shall never find them to-night amongst all these squirting funnels, squirrel-cages, and rabbit-holes; but if we light not on them before we reach the farther end, we will return, 10 and mount a guard at the entrance, and so secure them till morning'

They passed on, making a kind of careless search, but seemingly more intent on their own conversation than bent on discovering the persons who had created the nocturnal disturbance.

They had no sooner passed forward along the terrace, than Leicester, making a sign to Tressilian to follow him, glided away in an opposite direction, and escaped through the portico undiscovered. He conducted Tressilian to Mervyn's Tower, in which he was now again lodged; and then, ere parting with him, said these words, "If thou hast courage to continue and bring to an end what is thus broken off, be near me when the court goes forth to-morrow—we shall find a time, and I will give you a signal when it is fitting"

"My Lord," said Tressilian, "at another time I might have enquired the meaning of this strange and furious inveteracy against me. But you have laid that on my shoulder, which only blood can wash away; and were 30 you as high as your proudest wishes ever carried you, I would have from you satisfaction for my wounded honour."

## CHAPTER XXII.

THE amusement with which Elizabeth and her court were next day to be regaled, was an exhibition by the true-hearted men of Coventry, who were to represent the strife between the English and the Danes, agreeably to a custom long preserved in their ancient borough, and warranted for truth by old histories and chronicles. In this pageant, one party of the townsfolk presented the Saxons, and the other the Danes, and set forth, both in rude rhymes and with hard blows, the contentions of  
10 these two fierce nations, and the Amazonian courage of the English women, who, according to the story, were the principal agents in the general massacre of the Danes, which took place at Hocktide, in the year of God 1012.

These rough rural gambols may not altogether agree with the reader's preconceived idea of an entertainment presented before Elizabeth, in whose reign letters revived with such brilliancy, and whose court, governed by a female, whose sense of propriety was equal to her  
20 strength of mind, was no less distinguished for delicacy and refinement, than her councils for wisdom and fortitude. But whether from the political wish to seem interested in popular sports, or whether from a spark of old Henry's rough masculine spirit, which Elizabeth sometimes displayed, it is certain that the Queen laughed heartily at the imitation, or rather burlesque of chivalry, which was presented in the Coventry play. She called near her person the Earl of Sussex and Lord Hunsdon, partly perhaps to make amends to the former for the  
30 long and private audiences with which she had indulged

the Earl of Leicester, by engaging him in conversation upon a pastime, which better suited his taste than those pageants that were furnished forth from the stores of antiquity. The disposition which the Queen showed to laugh and jest with her military leaders, gave the Earl of Leicester the opportunity he had been watching for withdrawing from the royal presence, which to the court around, so well had he chosen his time, had the graceful appearance of leaving his rival free access to the Queen's person, instead of availing himself of his 10 right as her landlord, to stand perpetually betwixt others and the light of her countenance.

Leicester's thoughts, however, had a far different object from mere courtesy, for no sooner did he see the Queen fairly engaged in conversation with Sussex and Hunsdon, than, making a sign to Tressilian, who, according to appointment, watched his motions at a little distance, he extricated himself from the press, and walking towards the Chase, made his way through the crowds of ordinary spectators, who, with open mouth, 20 stood gazing on the battle of the English and the Danes. When he had accomplished this, which was a work of some difficulty, he shot another glance behind him to see that Tressilian had been equally successful, and as soon as he saw him also free from the crowd, he led the way to a small thicket, behind which stood a lackey, with two horses ready saddled. He flung himself on the one, and made signs to Tressilian to mount the other, who obeyed without speaking a single word.

Leicester then spurred his horse, and galloped without 30 stopping until he reached a sequestered spot, environed by lofty oaks, about a mile's distance from the Castle and in an opposite direction from the scene to which



curiosity was drawing every spectator. He there dismounted, bound his horse to a tree, and only pronouncing the words, "Here there is no risk of interruption," laid his cloak across his saddle, and drew his sword.

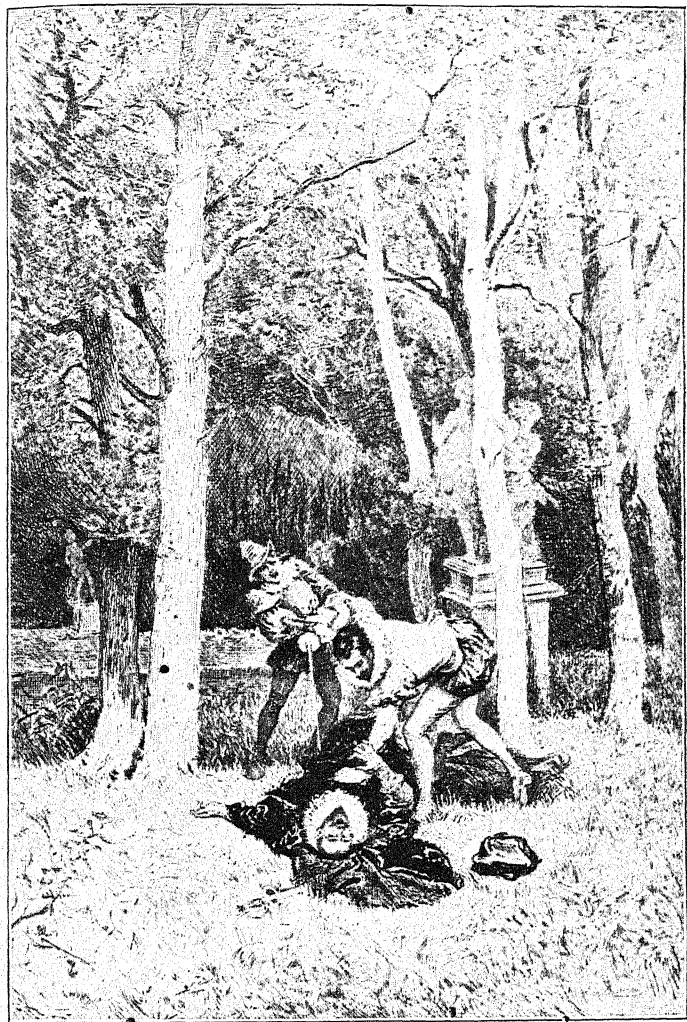
Tressilian imitated his example punctually, yet could not forbear saying, as he drew his weapon, "My lord, as I have been known to many as one who does not fear death, when placed in balance with honour, methinks I may, without derogation, ask, wherefore, in the name  
10 of all that is honourable, your lordship has dared to offer me such a mark of disgrace, as places us on these terms with respect to each other ? "

"If you like not such marks of my scorn," replied the Earl, "betake yourself instantly to your weapon, lest I repeat the usage you complain of."

"It shall not need, my lord," said Tressilian. "God judge betwixt us ' and your blood, if you fall, be on your own head."

He had scarce completed the sentence, when they  
20 instantly closed in combat.

But Leicester, who was a perfect master of defence among all other exterior accomplishments of the time, had seen, on the preceding night, enough of Tressilian's strength and skill, to make him fight with more caution than heretofore, and prefer a secure revenge to a hasty one. For some minutes they fought with equal skill and fortune, till, in a desperate lounge which Leicester successfully put aside, Tressilian exposed himself at disadvantage; and, in a subsequent attempt to close,  
30 the Earl forced his sword from his hand, and stretched him on the ground. With a grim smile he held the point of his rapier within two inches of the throat of his fallen adversary, and placing his foot at the same time upon



THE DUEL INTERRUPTED.—Drawn by Ad. Lalauze.

his breast, bid him confess his villainous wrongs towards him, and prepare for death.

"I have no villainy nor wrong towards thee to confess," answered Tressilian, "and am better prepared for death than thou. Use thine advantage as thou wilt, and may God forgive you! I have given you no cause for this."

"No cause!" exclaimed the Earl, "no cause!—but why parley with such a slave?—Die a liar, as thou hast lived!"

10 He had withdrawn his arm for the purpose of striking the fatal blow, when it was suddenly seized from behind.

The Earl turned in wrath to shake off the unexpected obstacle, but was surprised to find that a strange-looking boy had hold of his sword-arm, and clung to it with such  
 4 tenacity of grasp, that he could not shake him off without a considerable struggle, in the course of which Tressilian had opportunity to rise and possess himself once more of his weapon. Leicester again turned towards him with looks of unabated ferocity, and the  
 20 combat would have recommenced with still more desperation on both sides, had not the boy clung to Lord Leicester's knees, and in a shrill tone implored him to listen one moment ere he prosecuted this quarrel.

"Stand up, and let me go!" said Leicester, "or, by Heaven, I will pierce thee with my rapier!—What hast thou to do to bar my way to revenge?"

"Much—much!" exclaimed the undaunted boy; "since my folly has been the cause of these bloody quarrels between you, and perchance of worse evils. O,  
 30 if you would ever again enjoy the peace of an innocent mind, if you hope again to sleep in peace and untroubled by remorse, take so much leisure as to peruse this letter, and then do as you list."

While he spoke in this eager and earnest manner, to which his singular features and voice gave a goblin-like effect, he held up to Leicester a packet, secured with a long tress of woman's hair, of a beautiful light-brown colour. Enraged as he was, nay, almost blinded with fury to see his destined revenge so strangely frustrated, the Earl of Leicester could not resist this extraordinary supplicant. He snatched the letter from his hand—changed colour as he looked on the superscription—undid, with faltering hand, the knot which secured it 10—glanced over the contents, and, staggering back, would have fallen, had he not rested against the trunk of a tree, where he stood for an instant, his eyes bent on the letter; and his sword-point turned to the ground, without seeming to be conscious of the presence of an antagonist, towards whom he had shown little mercy, and who might in turn have taken him at advantage. But for such revenge Tressilian was too noble-minded—he also stood still in surprise, waiting the issue of this strange fit of passion, but holding his weapon ready to defend himself 20 in case of need, against some new and sudden attack on the part of Leicester, whom he again suspected to be under the influence of actual frenzy. The boy, indeed, he easily recognised as his old acquaintance Dickon, whose face, once seen, was scarcely to be forgotten; but how he came thither at so critical a moment, why his interference was so energetic, and, above all, how it came to produce so powerful an effect upon Leicester, were questions which he could not solve.

But the letter was of itself powerful enough to work 30 effects yet more wonderful. It was that which the unfortunate Amy had written to her husband, in which she alleged the reasons and manner of her flight from

Cumnor-Place, informed him of her having made her way to Kenilworth to enjoy his protection, and mentioned the circumstances which had compelled her to take refuge in Tressilian's apartment, earnestly requesting he would, without delay, assign her a more suitable asylum. The letter concluded with the most earnest expressions of devoted attachment, and submission to his will in all things, and particularly respecting her situation and place of residence, conjuring him only that  
10 she might not be placed under the guardianship or restraint of Varney.

The letter dropped from Leicester's hand when he had perused it. "Take my sword," he said, "Tressilian, and pierce my heart, as I would but now have pierced yours !"

"My lord," said Tressilian, "you have done me great wrong ; but something within my breast ever whispered that it was by egregious error."

"Error, indeed !" said Leicester, and handed him  
20 the letter ; "I have been made to believe a man of honour a villain, and the best and purest of creatures a false profligate.—Wretched boy, why comes this letter now, and where has the bearer lingered ?"

"I dare not tell you, my lord," said the boy, withdrawing, as if to keep beyond his reach ;—"but here comes one who was the messenger."

Wayland at the same moment came up ; and, interrogated by Leicester, hastily detailed all the circumstances of his escape with Amy,—the fatal practices  
30 which had driven her to flight,—and her anxious desire to throw herself under the instant protection of her husband,—pointing out the evidence of the domestics of Kenilworth, "who could not," he observed, "but

remember her eager enquiries after the Earl of Leicester on her first arrival."

"The villains!" exclaimed Leicester; "but O, that worst of villains, Varney!—and she is even now in his power!"

"But not, I trust in God," said Tressilian, "with any commands of fatal import?"

"No, no, no!" exclaimed the Earl, hastily—"I said something in madness—but it was recalled, fully recalled, by a hasty messenger; and she is now—she must now 10 be safe."

"Yes," said Tressilian, "she *must* be safe, and I *must* be assured of her safety. My own quarrel with you is ended, my lord; but there is another to begin with the seducer of Amy Robsart, who has screened his guilt under the cloak of the infamous Varney."

"The *seducer* of Amy!" replied Leicester, with a voice like thunder; "say her husband!—her misguided, blinded, most unworthy husband!—She is as surely Countess of Leicester as I am belted Earl. Nor can you, 20 sir, point out that manner of justice which I will not render her at my own free will. I need scarce say, I fear not your compulsion."

The generous nature of Tressilian was instantly turned from consideration of any thing personal to himself, and centred at once upon Amy's welfare. He had by no means undoubting confidence in the fluctuating resolutions of Leicester, whose mind seemed to him agitated beyond the government of calm reason; neither did he, notwithstanding the assurances he had received, think 30 Amy safe, in the hands of his dependents. "My lord," he said, calmly, "I mean you no offence, and am far from seeking a quarrel. But my duty to Sir Hugh

Robsart compels me to carry this matter instantly to the Queen, that the Countess's rank may be acknowledged in her person."

"You shall not need, sir," replied the Earl, haughtily; "do not dare to interfere. No voice but Dudley's shall proclaim Dudley's infamy.—To Elizabeth herself will I tell it, and then for Cumnor-Place with the speed of life and death!"

So saying, he unbound his horse from the tree, threw  
10 himself into the saddle, and rode at full gallop towards the Castle.

"Take me before you, Master Tressilian," said the boy, seeing Tressilian mount in the same haste—"my tale is not all told out, and I need your protection."

Tressilian complied, and followed the Earl, though at a less furious rate. By the way the boy confessed, with much contrition, that in resentment at Wayland's evading all his enquiries concerning the lady, after Dickon conceived he had in various ways merited his confidence,  
20 he had purloined from him, in revenge, the letter with which Amy had intrusted him for the Earl of Leicester. His purpose was to have restored it to him that evening, as he reckoned himself sure of meeting with him, in consequence of Wayland's having to perform the part of Arion, in the pageant. He was indeed something alarmed when he saw to whom the letter was addressed; but he argued that, as Leicester did not return to Kenilworth until that evening, it would be again in the possession of the proper messenger, as soon as, in the  
30 nature of things, it could possibly be delivered. But Wayland came not to the pageant, having been in the interim expelled by Lambourne from the Castle, and the boy, not being able to find him, or to get speak of

Tressilian, and finding himself in possession of a letter addressed to no less a person than the Earl of Leicester, became much afraid of the consequences of his frolic. The caution, and indeed the alarm, which Wayland had expressed respecting Varney and Lambourne, led him to judge, that the letter must be designed for the Earl's own hand, and that he might prejudice the lady by giving it to any of the domestics. He made an attempt or two to obtain an audience of Leicester, but the singularity of his features, and the meanness of his 10 appearance, occasioned his being always repulsed by the insolent menials whom he applied to for that purpose.

At length, the boy thought he was on the point of succeeding, when the Earl came down to the lower part of the hall ; but just as he was about to accost him, he was prevented by Tressilian. As sharp in ear as in wit, ✓ the boy heard the appointment settled betwixt them, to take place in the Pleasance, and resolved to add a third to the party, in hopes that, either in coming or in returning he might find an opportunity of delivering the letter 20 to Leicester ; for strange stories began to flit among the domestics, which alarmed him for the lady's safety. Accident, however, detained Dickon a little behind the Earl, and, as he reached the arcade, he saw them engaged in combat ; in consequence of which he hastened to alarm the guard, having little doubt, that what bloodshed took place betwixt them might arise out of his own frolic. Continuing to lurk in the portico, he heard the second appointment, which Leicester, at parting, assigned to Tressilian, and was keeping them in view during the 30 encounter of the Coventry men, when, to his surprise, he recognised Wayland in the crowd, much disguised, indeed, but not sufficiently so to escape the prying glance



of his old comrade. They drew aside out of the crowd to explain their situation to each other. The boy confessed to Wayland what we have above told, and the artist, in return, informed him, that his deep anxiety for the fate of the unfortunate lady had brought him back to the neighbourhood of the Castle, upon his learning that morning at a village about ten miles distant that Varney and Lambourne, whose violence he dreaded, had both left Kenilworth over-night.

10 While they spoke, they saw Leicester and Tressilian separate themselves from the crowd, dogged them until they mounted their horses, when the boy, whose speed of foot has been before mentioned, though he could not possibly keep up with them, yet arrived, as we have seen, soon enough to save Tressilian's life. The boy had just finished his tale when they reached the Gallery-tower.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

As Tressilian rode along the bridge lately the scene of so much riotous sport, he could not but observe that 20 men's countenances had singularly changed during the space of his brief absence. The mock fight was over, but the men, still habited in their masquing suits, stood together in groups, like the inhabitants of a city who have been just startled by some strange and alarming news.

When he reached the base-court, appearances were the same—domestics, retainers, and under-officers stood together and whispered, bending their eyes towards the windows of the great hall, with looks which seemed at 30 once alarmed and mysterious

Sir Nicholas Blount was the first person of his own particular acquaintance Tressilian saw, who left him no time to make enquiries, but greeted him with, "God help thy heart, Tressilian, thou art fitter for a clown than a courtier—thou canst not attend, as becomes one who follows her Majesty.—Here you are called for, wished for, waited for—no man but you will serve the turn."

"Why, what is the matter?" said Tressilian.

"Why, no one knows the matter," replied Blount; "I cannot smell it out myself, though I have a nose like 10 other courtiers. Only, my Lord of Leicester has galloped along the bridge, as if he would have rode over all in his passage, demanded an audience of the Queen, and is closeted even now with her, and Burleigh and Walsingham—and you are called for—but whether the matter be treason or worse, no one knows"

"He speaks true, by Heaven!" said Raleigh, who that instant appeared; "you must immediately to the Queen's presence."

Meanwhile Tressilian traversed the full length of the 20 great hall, in which the astonished courtiers formed various groups, and were whispering mysteriously together, while all kept their eyes fixed on the door, which led from the upper end of the hall into the Queen's withdrawing apartment. Raleigh pointed to the door—Tressilian knocked, and was instantly admitted.

Upon entrance, Tressilian found himself, not without a strong palpitation of heart, in the presence of Elizabeth, who was walking to and fro in a violent agitation, which she seemed to scorn to conceal, while two or three of her 30 most sage and confidential counsellors exchanged anxious looks with each other, but delayed speaking till her wrath had abated. Before the empty chair of state in

which she had been seated, and which was half pushed aside with the violence with which she had started from it, knelt Leicester, his arms crossed, and his brows bent on the ground, still and motionless as the effigies upon a sepulchre. Beside him stood the Lord Shrewsbury, then Earl Marshal of England, holding his baton of office—the Earl's sword was unbuckled, and lay before him on the floor.

“Ho, sir,” said the Queen, coming close up to Tressilian, and stamping on the floor with the action and manner of Henry himself, “*you* knew of this fair work—you are an accomplice in this deception which has been practised on us—you have been a main cause of our doing injustice?” Tressilian dropped on his knee before the Queen, his good sense showing him the risk of attempting any defence at that moment of irritation. “Art dumb, sirrah!” she continued; “thou know’st of this affair—dost thou not?”

“Not, gracious madam, that this poor lady was  
20 Countess of Leicester”

“Nor shall any one know her for such,” said Elizabeth. “Death of my life! Countess of Leicester!—I say Dame Amy Dudley—and well if she have not cause to write herself widow of the traitor Robert Dudley.”

“Madam,” said Leicester, “do with me what it may be your will to do—but work no injury on this gentleman—he hath in no way deserved it.”

“And will he be the better for thy intercession,” said the Queen, leaving Tressilian, who slowly arose, and  
30 rushing to Leicester, who continued kneeling,—“the better for *thy* intercession, thou doubly false—thou doubly forsworn?—of thy intercession, whose villainy hath made me ridiculous to my subjects, and odious

to myself?—I could tear out mine eyes for their blindness ! ”

Burleigh here ventured to interpose.

“ Madam,” he said, “ remember that you are a Queen—Queen of England—mother of your people. Give not way to this wild storm of passion.”

Elizabeth turned round to him, while a tear actually twinkled in her proud and angry eye. “ Burleigh,” she said, “ thou art a statesman—thou dost not, thou canst not, comprehend half the scorn—half the misery, that 10 man has poured on me ! ”

With the utmost caution—with the deepest reverence, Burleigh took her hand at the moment he saw her heart was at the fullest, and led her aside to an oriel window, apart from the others.

“ Madam,” he said, “ I am a statesman, but I am also a man—a man already grown old in your councils, who have not and cannot have a wish on earth but your glory and happiness—I pray you to be composed.”

“ Ah, Burleigh,” said Elizabeth, “ thou little knowest ” 20  
—here her tears fell over her cheeks in despite of her.

“ I do—I do know, my honoured sovereign. O beware that you lead not others to guess that which they know not ! ”

“ Ha ! ” said Elizabeth, pausing as if a new train of thought had suddenly shot across her brain. “ Burleigh, thou art right—thou art right—any thing but disgrace—any thing but a confession of weakness—any thing rather than seem the cheated—slighted.—’Sdeath ! to think on it is distraction ! ” 30

“ Be but yourself, my Queen,” said Burleigh ; “ and soar far above a weakness which no Englishman will ever believe his Elizabeth could have entertained, unless the .

violence of her disappointment carries a sad conviction to his bosom."

"What weakness, my lord?" said Elizabeth, haughtily; "would you too insinuate that the favour in which I held yonder proud traitor, derived its source from aught?"—But here she could no longer sustain the proud tone which she had assumed, and again softened as she said, "But why should I strive to deceive even thee, my good and wise servant!"

10 Burleigh stooped to kiss her hand with affection, and—rare in the annals of courts—a tear of true sympathy dropped from the eye of the minister on the hand of his Sovereign.

It is probable that the consciousness of possessing this sympathy, aided Elizabeth in supporting her mortification. She turned from Burleigh, and sternly paced the hall till her features had recovered their usual dignity, and her mien its wonted stateliness of regular motion.

20 "Our Sovereign is her noble self once more," whispered Burleigh to Walsingham; "mark what she does, and take heed you thwart her not."

She then approached Leicester, and said, with calmness, "My Lord Shrewsbury, we discharge you of your prisoner.—My Lord of Leicester, rise and take up your sword—a quarter of an hour's restraint, under the custody of our Marshal, my lord, is, we think, no high penance for months of falsehood practised upon us. We will now hear the progress of this affair."—She then  
30 seated herself in her chair, and said, "You, Tressilian, step forward, and say what you know."

Tressilian told his story generously, suppressing as much as he could what affected Leicester, and saying

nothing of their having twice actually fought together. It is very probable that, in doing so, he did the Earl good service, for had the Queen at that instant found any thing on account of which she might vent her wrath upon him, without laying open sentiments of which she was ashamed, it might have fared hard with him. She paused when Tressilian had finished his tale

“We will take that Wayland,” she said, “into our own service, and place the boy in our Secretary-office for instruction, that he may in future use discretion towards 10 letters. For you, Tressilian, you did wrong in not communicating the whole truth to us, and your promise not to do so was both imprudent and undutiful. Yet, having given your word to this unhappy lady, it was the part of a man and a gentleman to keep it; and on the whole, we esteem you for the character you have sustained in this matter.—My Lord of Leicester, it is now your turn to tell us the truth, an exercise to which you seem of late to have been too much a stranger”

Accordingly, she extorted, by successive questions, 20 the whole history of his first acquaintance with Amy Robsart—their marriage—his jealousy—the causes on which it was founded, and many particulars besides. Leicester’s confession, for such it might be called, was wrenched from him piecemeal, yet was upon the whole accurate, excepting that he totally omitted to mention that he had, by implication, or otherwise, assented to Varney’s designs upon the life of his Countess. Yet the consciousness of this was what at that moment lay nearest to his heart; and although he trusted in great 30 measure to the very positive counter-orders which he had sent by Lambourne, it was his purpose to set out for Cumnor-Place, in person, as soon as he should be

dismissed from the presence of the Queen, who, he concluded, would presently leave Kenilworth.

But the Earl reckoned without his host. It is true, his presence and his communications were gall and wormwood to his once partial mistress. But, barred from every other and more direct mode of revenge, the Queen perceived that she gave her false suitor torture by these enquiries, and dwelt on them for that reason, no more regarding the pain which she herself  
10 experienced, than the savage cares for the searing of his own hands by grasping the hot pincers with which he tears the flesh of his captive enemy.

At length, however, the haughty lord, like a deer that turns to bay, gave intimation that his patience was failing. "Madam," he said, "I have been much to blame—more than even your just resentment has expressed. Yet, madam, let me say, that my guilt, if it be unpardonable, was not unprovoked; and that, if beauty and condescending dignity could seduce the  
20 frail heart of a human being, I might plead both, as the causes of my concealing this secret from your Majesty."

The Queen was so much struck by this reply, which Leicester took care should be heard by no one but herself, that she was for the moment silenced, and the Earl had the temerity to pursue his advantage. "Your Grace, who has pardoned so much, will excuse my throwing myself on your royal mercy for those expressions, which were yester-morning accounted but a light offence."

30 The Queen fixed her eyes on him while she replied, "Now, by Heaven, my lord, thy effrontery passes the bounds of belief, as well as patience! But it shall avail thee nothing.—What, ho! my lords, come all and hear

the news.—My Lord of Leicester's stolen marriage has cost me a husband, and England a King. His lordship is patriarchal in his tastes—one wife at a time was insufficient, and he designed us the honour of his left hand. Now, is not this too insolent,—that I could not grace him with a few marks of court-favour, but he must presume to think my hand and crown at his disposal ?—You, however, think better of me ; and I can pity this ambitious man, as I could a child, whose bubble of soap has burst between his hands. We go to the presence-  
chamber.—My Lord of Leicester, we command your close attendance on us.”

All was eager expectation in the hall, and what was the universal astonishment, when the Queen said to those next her, “ The revels of Kenilworth are not yet exhausted, my lords and ladies—we are to solemnize the noble owner's marriage ”

There was an universal expression of surprise.

“ It is true, on our royal word,” said the Queen ; “ he hath kept this a secret even from us, that he might surprise us with it at this very place and time. I see you are dying of curiosity to know the happy bride.—It is Amy Robsart, the same who, to make up the May-game yesterday, figured in the pageant as the wife of his servant Varney.”

“ For God's sake, madam,” said the Earl, approaching her with a mixture of humility, vexation, and shame in his countenance, and speaking so low as to be heard by no one else, “ take my head, as you threatened in your anger, but spare me these taunts ! Urge not a falling man—tread not on a crushed worm.”

“ A worm, my lord ? ” said the Queen, in the same tone ; “ nay, a snake is the nobler reptile, and the more



exact similitude—the frozen snake you wot of, which was warmed in a certain bosom ”——

“ For your own sake—for mine, madam,” said the Earl—“ while there is yet some reason left in me ”——

“ Speak aloud, my lord,” said Elizabeth, “ and at farther distance, so please you—your breath thaws our ruff What have you to ask of us ? ”

“ Permission,” said the unfortunate Earl, humbly, “ to travel to Cumnor-Place.”

- 10 “ To fetch home your bride belike ?—Why, ay,—that is but right—for, as we have heard, she is indifferently cared for there. But, my lord, you go not in person. Tressilian shall go to Cumnor-Place instead of you, and with him some gentleman who hath been sworn of our chamber, lest my Lord of Leicester should be again jealous of his old rival.—Whom wouldst thou have to be in commission with thee, Tressilian ? ”

Tressilian, with humble deference, suggested the name of Raleigh.

- 20 “ Why, ay,” said the Queen ; “ so God ha’ me, thou hast made a good choice. He is a young knight besides, and to deliver a lady from prison is an appropriate first adventure. Take a sufficient force with you, gentlemen—bring the lady in all honour—lose no time, and God be with you ! ”

They bowed, and left the presence.

- The troop consisted of six persons ; for, besides Wayland, they had in company a royal pursuivant and two stout serving-men. All were well armed, and  
30 travelled as fast as it was possible with justice to their horses, which had a long journey before them. They endeavoured to procure some tidings as they rode along of Varney and his party, but could hear none, as they had

travelled in the dark. At a small village about twelve miles from Kenilworth, where they gave some refreshment to their horses, a poor clergyman, the curate of the place, came out of a small cottage, and entreated any of the company who might know aught of surgery to look in for an instant on a dying man.

The empiric Wayland undertook to do his best, and as the curate conducted him to the spot, he learned that the man had been found on the highroad, about a mile from the village, by labourers, as they were going to their 10 work on the preceding morning, and the curate had given him shelter in his house. He had received a gunshot wound which seemed to be obviously mortal, but whether in a brawl or from robbers they could not learn, as he was in a fever, and spoke nothing connectedly. Wayland entered the dark and lowly apartment, and no sooner had the curate drawn aside the curtain, than he knew in the distorted features of the patient the countenance of Michael Lambourne. Under pretence of seeking something which he wanted, Wayland hastily 20 apprized his fellow-travellers of this extraordinary circumstance; and both Tressilian and Raleigh, full of boding apprehensions, hastened to the curate's house to see the dying man.

The wretch was by this time in the agonies of death, from which a much better surgeon than Wayland could not have rescued him, for the bullet had passed clear through his body. He was sensible, however, at least in part, for he knew Tressilian, and made signs that he wished him to stoop over his bed. Tressilian did so, and 30 after some inarticulate murmurs, in which the names of Varney and Lady Leicester were alone distinguishable, Lambourne bade him "make haste, or he would come

too late." It was in vain Tressilian urged the patient for farther information; he seemed to become in some degree delirious, and when he again made a signal to attract Tressilian's attention, it was only for the purpose of desiring him to inform his uncle, Giles Gosling of the Black Bear, "that he had died without his shoes after all." A convulsion verified his words a few minutes later, and the travellers derived nothing from having met with him, save the obscure fears concerning the fate  
10 of the Countess, which his dying words were calculated to convey, and which induced them to urge their journey with the utmost speed, pressing horses in the Queen's name, when those which they rode became unfit for service.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

WE are now to return to that part of our story where we intimated that Varney, possessed of the authority of the Earl of Leicester, and of the Queen's permission to the same effect, hastened to secure himself against discovery of his perfidy, by removing the Countess from  
20 Kenilworth Castle. He had proposed to set forth early in the morning, but reflecting that the Earl might relent in the interim, and seek another interview with the Countess, he resolved to prevent, by immediate departure, all chance of what would probably have ended in his detection and ruin. For this purpose he called for Lambourne, and was exceedingly incensed to find that his trusty attendant was abroad on some ramble in the neighbouring village, or elsewhere. ' As his return was expected, Sir Richard commanded that he should  
30 prepare himself for attending him on an immediate

journey, and follow him in case he returned after his departure.

In the meanwhile, Varney used the ministry of a servant called Robin Tider, one to whom the mysteries of Cumnor-Place were already in some degree known, as he had been there more than once in attendance on the Earl. To this man, whose character resembled that of Lambourne, though he was neither quite so prompt nor altogether so profligate, Varney gave command to have three horses saddled, and to prepare a horse-litter, 10 and have them in readiness at the postern-gate. The natural enough excuse of his lady's insanity, which was now universally believed, accounted for the secrecy with which she was to be removed from the Castle, and he reckoned on the same apology in case the unfortunate Amy's resistance or screams should render such necessary. The agency of Anthony Foster was indispensable, and that Varney now went to secure.

This person, naturally of a sour unsocial disposition, and somewhat tired, besides, with his journey from 20 Cumnor to Warwickshire, in order to bring the news of the Countess's escape, had early extricated himself from the crowd of wassailers, and betaken himself to his chamber, where he lay asleep, when Varney, completely equipped for travelling, and with a dark lantern in his hand, entered his apartment. He paused an instant to listen to what his associate was murmuring in his sleep, and could plainly distinguish the words, "*Ave Maria—ora pro nobis.*—No—it runs not so—deliver us from evil—Ay, so it goes."

30

"Praying in his sleep," said Varney; "and confounding his old and new devotions.—He must have more need of prayer ere I am done with him.—What ho !

holy man—most blessed penitent!—Awake—awake!—  
The devil has not discharged you from service yet.”

As Varney at the same time shook the sleeper by the arm, it changed the current of his ideas, and he roared out, “Thieves!—thieves! I will die in defence of my gold—my hard-won gold, that has cost me so dear.—Where is Janet?—Is Janet safe?”

“Safe enough, thou bellowing fool!” said Varney; “art thou not ashamed of thy clamour?—Ay, that is  
10 right—forget not your pistols—Come now, and let us away.”

“Whither?” said Anthony.

“To my lady’s chamber—and, mind—she *must* along with us. Thou art not a fellow to be startled by a shriek?”

“Not if Scripture-reason can be rendered for it; and it is written, ‘wives, obey your husbands’ But will my lord’s commands bear us out if we use violence?”

“Tush, man! here is his signet,” answered Varney;  
20 and, having thus silenced the objections of his associate, they went together to Lord Hunsdon’s apartments, and, acquainting the sentinel with their purpose, as a matter sanctioned by the Queen and the Earl of Leicester, they entered the chamber of the unfortunate Countess.

The horror of Amy may be conceived, when, starting from a broken slumber, she saw at her bedside Varney, the man on earth she most feared and hated. It was even a consolation to see that he was not alone, though she had so much reason to dread his sullen companion.

30 “Madam,” said Varney, “there is no time for ceremony. My Lord of Leicester, having fully considered the exigencies of the time, sends you his orders immediately to accompany us on our return to Cumnor-

Place. See, here is his signet, in token of his instant and pressing commands."

"It is false!" said the Countess; "thou hast stolen the warrant,—thou, who art capable of every villany, from the blackest to the basest!"

"It is TRUE, madam," replied Varney; "so true, that if you do not instantly arise, and prepare to attend us, we must compel you to obey our orders."

"Compel!—thou darest not put it to that issue, base as thou art," exclaimed the unhappy Countess. 10

"That remains to be proved, madam," said Varney, who had determined on intimidation as the only means of subduing her high spirit; "if you put me to it, you will find me a rough groom of the chamber."

It was at this threat that Amy screamed so fearfully, that had it not been for the received opinion of her insanity, she would quickly have had Lord Hunsdon and others to her aid. Perceiving, however, that her cries were vain, she appealed to Foster in the most affecting terms, conjuring him, as his daughter Janet's honour and purity was dear to him, not to permit her to be treated with unwomanly violence.

"Why, madam, wives must obey their husbands,—there's Scripture warrant for it," said Foster; "and if you will dress yourself, and come with us patiently, there's no one shall lay finger on you while I can draw a pistol-trigger."

Seeing no help arrive, and comforted even by the dogged language of Foster, the Countess promised to arise and dress herself, if they would agree to retire from the room. Varney at the same time assured her of all safety and honour while in their hands, and promised, that he himself would not approach her, since his

presence was so displeasing. Her husband, he added, would be at Cumnor-Place within twenty-four hours after they had reached it.

Somewhat comforted by this assurance, upon which, however, she saw little reason to rely, the unhappy Amy made her toilette by the assistance of the lantern, which they left with her when they quitted the apartment.

Weeping, trembling, and praying, the unfortunate lady dressed herself,—with sensations how different from  
10 the days in which she was wont to decorate herself in all the pride of conscious beauty ! She endeavoured to delay the completing her dress as long as she could, until, terrified by the impatience of Varney, she was obliged to declare herself ready to attend them.

When they were about to move, the Countess clung to Foster with such an appearance of terror at Varney's approach, that the latter protested to her, with a deep oath, that he had no intention whatever of even coming near her. "If you do but consent to execute your  
20 husband's will in quietness, you shall," he said, "see but little of me. I will leave you undisturbed to the care of the usher whom your good taste prefers."

"My husband's will !" she exclaimed. "But it is the will of God, and let that be sufficient to me.—I will go with Master Foster as unresistingly as ever did a literal sacrifice. He is a father at least ; and will have decency if not humanity. For thee, Varney, were it my latest word, thou art an equal stranger to both."

30 Varney replied only, she was at liberty to choose, and walked some paces before them to show the way ; while, half leaning on Foster, and half carried by him, the Countess was transported from Saintlowe's Tower to

the postern-gate, where Tider waited with the litter and horses.

The Countess was placed in the former without resistance. She saw with some satisfaction, that while Foster and Tider rode close by the litter, which the latter conducted, the dreaded Varney lingered behind, and was soon lost in darkness. A little while she strove, as the road winded round the verge of the lake, to keep sight of those stately towers which called her husband lord, and which still, in some places, sparkled with lights, 10 where wassailers were yet revelling. But when the direction of the road rendered this no longer possible, she drew back her head, and, sinking down in the litter, recommended herself to the care of Providence.

Besides the desire of inducing the Countess to proceed quietly on her journey, Varney had it also in view to have an interview with Lambourne, by whom he every moment expected to be joined, without the presence of any witnesses. He knew the character of this man, prompt, bloody, resolute, and greedy, and judged him 20 the most fit agent he could employ in his farther designs. But ten miles of their journey had been measured ere he heard the hasty clatter of horse's hoofs behind him, and was overtaken by Michael Lambourne.

Fretted as he was with his absence, Varney received his profligate servant with a rebuke of unusual bitterness. "Drunken villain," he said, "thy idleness and debauched folly will stretch a halter ere it be long; and, for me, I care not how soon!"

This style of objurgation, Lambourne, who was elated 30 to an unusual degree, not only by an extraordinary cup of wine, but by the sort of confidential interview he had just had with the Earl, and the secret of which he had



made himself master, did not receive with his wonted humility. "He would take no insolence of language," he said, "from the best knight that ever wore spurs. Lord Leicester had detained him on some business of import, and that was enough for Varney, who was but a servant like himself."

Varney was not a little surprised at his unusual tone of insolence; but, ascribing it to liquor, suffered it to pass as if unnoticed, and then began to tamper with  
10 Lambourne, touching his willingness to aid in removing out of the Earl of Leicester's way an obstacle to a rise, which would put it in his power to reward his trusty followers to their utmost wish. And upon Michael Lambourne's seeming ignorant what was meant, he plainly indicated "the litterload, yonder," as the impediment which he desired should be removed.

"Look you, Sir Richard, and so forth," said Michael, "some are wiser than some, that is one thing, and some are worse than some, that's another. I know my lord's  
20 mind on this matter better than thou, for he hath trusted me fully in the matter. Here are his mandates, and his last words were, Michael Lambourne,—for his lordship speaks to me as a gentleman of the sword, and useth not the words drunken villain, or such like phrases of those who know not how to bear new dignities,—Varney, says he, must pay the utmost respect to my Countess—I trust to you for looking to it, Lambourne, says his lordship, and you must bring back my signet from him peremptorily."

30 "Ay," replied Varney, "said he so, indeed? You know all, then?"

"All—all—and you were as wise to make a friend of me while the weather is fair betwixt us."

“And was there no one present,” said Varney, “when my lord so spoke?”

“Not a breathing creature,” replied Lambourne. “Think you my lord would trust any one with such matters, save an approved man of action like myself?”

“Most true,” said Varney; and, making a pause, he looked forward on the moonlight road. They were traversing a wide and open heath. The litter being at least a mile before them, was both out of sight and hearing. He looked behind, and there was an expanse, 10 lighted by the moonbeams, without one human being in sight. He resumed his speech to Lambourne: “And will you turn upon your master, who has introduced you to this career of courtlike favour—whose apprentice you have been, Michael—who has taught you the depths and shallows of court intrigue?”

“Michael not me!” said Lambourne; “I have a name will brook a *master* before it as well as another; and as to the rest, if I have been an apprentice, my indenture is out, and I am resolute to set up for 20 myself.”

“Take thy quittance first, thou fool!” said Varney; and with a pistol, which he had for some time held in his hand, shot Lambourne through the body.

The wretch fell from his horse, without a single groan; and Varney, dismounting, rifled his pockets, turning out the lining, that it might appear he had fallen by robbers. He secured the Earl’s packet, which was his chief object, but he also took Lambourne’s purse, containing some gold pieces, the relics of what his debauchery had left 30 him, and, with a singular combination of feelings, carried it in his hand only the length of a small river, which crossed the road, into which he threw it as far as

he could fling Such are the strange remnants of conscience which remain after she seems totally subdued, that this cruel and remorseless man would have felt himself degraded had he pocketed the few pieces belonging to the wretch whom he had thus ruthlessly slain.

The murderer reloaded his pistol, after cleansing the lock and barrel from the appearances of late explosion, and rode calmly after the litter, satisfying himself that he had so adroitly removed a troublesome witness to  
10 many of his intrigues, and the bearer of mandates which he had no intention to obey, and which, therefore, he was desirous it should be thought had never reached his hand.

The remainder of the journey was made with a degree of speed, which showed the little care they had for the health of the unhappy Countess. They paused only at places where all was under their command, and where the tale they were prepared to tell of the insane Lady Varney would have obtained ready credit, had she made  
20 an attempt to appeal to the compassion of the few persons admitted to see her. But Amy saw no chance of obtaining a hearing from any to whom she had an opportunity of addressing herself, and, besides, was too terrified by the presence of Varney, to violate the implied condition, under which she was to travel free from his company. The authority of Varney, often so used, during the Earl's private journeys to Cumnor, readily procured relays of horses where wanted, so that they approached Cumnor-Place upon the night after  
30 they left Kenilworth.

At this period of the journey, Varney came up to the rear of the litter, as he had done before repeatedly during their progress, and asked, "What does she?"

"She sleeps," said Foster; "I would we were home—her strength is exhausted."

"Rest will restore her," answered Varney. "She shall soon sleep sound and long—we must consider how to lodge her in safety."

"In her own apartments, to be sure," said Foster, "I have sent Janet to her aunt's, with a proper rebuke, and the old women are truth itself—for they hate this lady cordially."

"We will not trust them, however, friend Anthony,"<sup>10</sup> said Varney; "we must secure her in that stronghold where you keep your gold."

"My gold!" said Anthony, much alarmed; "why, what gold have I?—God help me, I have no gold—I would I had."

"Now, marry, hang thee, thou stupid brute—who thinks of, or cares for, thy gold?—If I did, could I not find an hundred better ways to come at it?—In one word, thy bedchamber, which thou hast fenced so curiously, must be her place of seclusion; and thou,<sup>20</sup> thou hind, shalt press her pillows of down.—I dare to say the Earl will never ask after the rich furniture of these four rooms."

When they had arrived at Cumnor-Place, the Countess asked eagerly for Janet, and showed much alarm when informed that she was no longer to have the attendance of that amiable girl.

"My daughter is dear to me, madam," said Foster, gruffly; "and I desire not that she should get the court-tricks of lying and 'scaping—somewhat too much of<sup>30</sup> that had she learned already, an it please your ladyship."

The Countess, much fatigued and greatly terrified by the circumstances of her journey, made no answer to

this insolence, but mildly expressed a wish to retire to her chamber

"Ay, ay," muttered Foster, "'tis but reasonable; but, under favour, you go not to your gewgaw toy-house yonder—you will sleep to-night in better security "

"I would it were in my grave," said the Countess: "but that mortal feelings shiver at the idea of soul and body parting."

"You, I guess, have no chance to shiver at that,"  
10 replied Foster. "My lord comes hither to-morrow, and doubtless you will make your own ways good with him "

"But does he come hither?—does he indeed, good Foster ? "

"O ay, good Foster ! " replied the other. "But what Foster shall I be to-morrow, when you speak of me to my lord—though all I have done was to obey his own orders ? "

"You shall be my protector—a rough one indeed—but still a protector," answered the Countess. "O that  
20 Janet were but here ! "

"She is better where she is," answered Foster—"one of you is enough to perplex a plain head—but will you taste any refreshment ? "

"O no, no—my chamber—my chamber. I trust," she said, apprehensively, "I may secure it on the inside ? "

"With all my heart," answered Foster, "so I may secure it on the outside ; " and taking a light, he led the way to a part of the building where Amy had never been, and conducted her up a stair of great height,  
30 preceded by one of the old women with a lamp. At the head of the stair, which seemed of almost immeasurable height, they crossed a short wooden gallery, formed of black oak, and very narrow, at the farther end of

which was a strong oaken door, which opened and admitted them into the miser's apartment, homely in its accommodations in the very last degree, and, except in name, little different from a prison-room.

Foster stopped at the door, and gave the lamp to the Countess, without either offering or permitting the attendance of the old woman who had carried it. The lady stood not on ceremony, but taking it hastily, barred the door, and secured it with the ample means provided on the inside for that purpose. 10

Varney, meanwhile, had lurked behind on the stairs, but hearing the door barred, he now came up on tiptoe, and Foster, winking to him, pointed with self-complacence to a piece of concealed machinery in the wall, which, playing with much ease and little noise, dropped a part of the wooden gallery, after the manner of a drawbridge, so as to cut off all communication between the door of the bedroom, which he usually inhabited, and the landing-place of the high winding-stair which ascended to it. The rope by which this 20 machinery was wrought was generally carried within the bedchamber, it being Foster's object to provide against invasion from without; but now that it was intended to secure the prisoner within, the cord had been brought over to the landing-place, and was there made fast, when Foster, with much complacency, had dropped the unsuspected trap-door.

Varney looked with great attention at the machinery, and peeped more than once down the abyss which was opened by the fall of the trap-door. It was dark as 30 pitch, and seemed profoundly deep, going, as Foster informed his confederate in a whisper, nigh to the lowest vault of the Castle. Varney cast once more a fixed and

long look down into this sable gulf, and then followed Foster to the part of the manor-house most usually inhabited.

When they arrived in the parlour which we have mentioned, Varney requested Foster to get them supper, and said, "Yonder trap-door—yonder gimcrack of thine, will remain secure in appearance, will it not, though the supports are withdrawn beneath?"

"Ay, marry, will it," said Foster, "so long as it is  
10 not trodden on."

"But were the lady to attempt an escape over it," replied Varney, "her weight would carry it down?"

"A mouse's weight would do it," said Foster.

"Why, then, she dies in attempting her escape, and what could you or I help it, honest Tony? Let us to bed, we will adjust our project to-morrow."

On the next day, when evening approached, Varney summoned Foster to the execution of their plan. Tider and Foster's old man-servant were sent on a feigned  
20 errand down to the village, and Anthony himself, as if anxious to see that the Countess suffered no want of accommodation, visited her place of confinement. He was so staggered at the mildness and patience with which she seemed to endure her confinement, that he could not help earnestly recommending to her not to cross the threshold of her room on any account whatever, until Lord Leicester should come, "which," he added, "I trust in God, will be very soon." Amy patiently promised that she would resign herself to her fate, and  
30 Foster returned to his hardened companion with his conscience half-eased of the perilous load that weighed on it. "I have warned her," he said; "surely in vain is the snare set in the sight of any bird!"

He left, therefore, the Countess's door unsecured on the outside, and, under the eye of Varney, withdrew the supports which sustained the falling trap, which, therefore, kept its level position merely by a slight adhesion. They withdrew to wait the issue on the ground-floor adjoining, but they waited long in vain. At length Varney, after walking long to and fro, with his face muffled in his cloak, threw it suddenly back, and exclaimed, "Surely never was a woman fool enough to neglect so fair an opportunity of escape!" 10

"Perhaps she is resolved," said Foster, "to await her husband's return."

"True!—most true," said Varney, rushing out, "I had not thought of that before."

In less than two minutes, Foster, who remained behind, heard the tread of a horse in the court-yard, and then a whistle similar to that which was the Earl's usual signal;—the instant after the door of the Countess's chamber opened, and in the same moment the trap-door gave way. There was a rushing sound—20 a heavy fall—a faint groan—and all was over.

At the same instant, Varney called in at the window, in an accent and tone which was an indescribable mixture betwixt horror and raillery, "Is the bird caught?—is the deed done?"

"O God, forgive us!" replied Anthony Foster.

"Why, thou fool," said Varney, "thy toil is ended, and thy reward secure. Look down into the vault—what seest thou?"

"I see only a heap of white clothes, like a snowdrift," said Foster. "O God, she moves her arm!" 30

"Hurl something down on her.—Thy gold chest, Tony—it is an heavy one."



"Varney, thou art an incarnate fiend!" replied Foster.—"There needs nothing more—she is gone!"

"So pass our troubles," said Varney, entering the room; "I dreamed not I could have mimicked the Earl's call so well."

"Oh, if there be judgment in Heaven, thou hast deserved it," said Foster, "and wilt meet it!—Thou hast destroyed her by means of her best affections.—It is a seething of the kid in the mother's milk!"

10 "Thou art a fanatical ass," replied Varney; "let us now think how the alarm should be given,—the body is to remain where it is."

But their wickedness was to be permitted no longer;—for, even while they were at this consultation, Tressilian and Raleigh broke in upon them, having obtained admittance by means of Tider and Foster's servant, whom they had secured at the village.

Anthony Foster fled on their entrance; and, knowing each corner and pass of the intricate old house, escaped  
20 all search. But Varney was taken on the spot; and, instead of expressing compunction for what he had done, seemed to take a fiendish pleasure in pointing out to them the remains of the murdered Countess, while at the same time he defied them to show that he had any share in her death. The despairing grief of Tressilian, on viewing the mangled and yet warm remains of what had lately been so lovely and so beloved, was such, that Raleigh was compelled to have him removed from the place by force, while he himself assumed the direction of  
30 what was to be done.

Varney, upon a second examination, made very little mystery either of the crime or of its motives; alleging, as a reason for his frankness, that though much of what

he confessed could only have attached to him by suspicion, yet such suspicion would have been sufficient to deprive him of Leicester's confidence, and to destroy all his towering plans of ambition. "I was not born," he said, "to drag on the remainder of life a degraded outcast,—nor will I so die, that my fate shall make a holiday to the vulgar herd."

From these words it was apprehended he had some design upon himself, and he was carefully deprived of all means by which such could be carried into execution. 10 But like some of the heroes of antiquity, he carried about his person a small quantity of strong poison, prepared probably by the celebrated Demetrius Alasco. Having swallowed this potion over-night, he was found next morning dead in his cell.

The fate of his colleague in wickedness was long unknown. Cumnor-Place was deserted immediately after the murder ; for, in the vicinity of what was called the Lady Dudley's Chamber, the domestics pretended to hear groans, and screams, and other supernatural noises. 20 After a certain length of time, Janet, hearing no tidings of her father, became the uncontrolled mistress of his property, and conferred it with her hand upon Wayland, now a man of settled character, and holding a place in Elizabeth's household. But it was after they had been both dead for some years, that their eldest son and heir, in making some researches about Cumnor Hall, discovered a secret passage, closed by an iron door, which, opening from behind the bed in the Lady Dudley's Chamber, descended to a sort of cell, in which they found an iron 30 chest containing a quantity of gold, and a human skeleton stretched above it. The fate of Anthony Foster was now manifest. He had fled to this place of

concealment, forgetting the key of the spring lock ; and being barred from escape, by the means he had used for preservation of that gold for which he had sold his salvation, he had there perished miserably. Unquestionably the groans and screams heard by the domestics were not entirely imaginary, but were those of this wretch, who, in his agony, was crying for relief and succour.

The news of the Countess's dreadful fate put a sudden period to the pleasures of Kenilworth. Leicester retired  
10 from court, and for a considerable time abandoned himself to his remorse. But as Varney in his last declaration had been studious to spare the character of his patron, the Earl was the object rather of compassion than resentment. The Queen at length recalled him to court ; he was once more distinguished as a statesman and favourite, and the rest of his career is well known to history. But there was something retributive in his death, if, according to an account very generally received, it took place from his swallowing a draught of poison,  
20 which was designed by him for another person.

Sir Hugh Robsart died very soon after his daughter, having settled his estate on Tressilian. But neither the prospect of rural independence, nor the promises of favour which Elizabeth held out to induce him to follow the court, could remove his profound melancholy. Wherever he went, he seemed to see before him the disfigured corpse of the early and only object of his affection. At length, having made provision for the maintenance of the old friends and old servants who  
30 formed Sir Hugh's family at Ladcote Hall, he himself embarked with his friend Raleigh for the Virginia expedition, and, young in years but old in grief, died before his day in that foreign land.

## NOTES.

P 1, 1 1 baulks, disappointments He had failed to get satisfactory answers to his enquiries.

3 ropes One of his old acquaintances had been hanged.

crossbow shafts, bolts from a bow fixed across a stock Another of his friends had been caught poaching and shot by the park keeper with a crossbow.

pursuivant, a royal officer with power to execute warrants for arrest.

7. he. Grammar requires 'him.'

8 Latimer and Ridley, burnt at Oxford for heresy in 1555.

P. 2, 1 3. brook, endure.

8 Reeve. As reeve, he managed the estate for the Abbot.

10. precisian, puritan.

14. quotha is a colloquial corruption of 'quoth he,' used in repeating for sarcastic comment what some one has said.

17. By the same token. The mention of Cumnor brings to his mind that he robbed the orchard.

21. hath a right in it, an interest in it.

22 church lands, estates belonging to the Church, which were confiscated by Henry VIII at the Reformation. Many of these lands were given to court favourites.

24. wight, person.

27. in the case, concerned in the matter

33. cat-and-dog life, life of continual quarrelling.

P. 3, 1 3. that men keep such a coil about, who creates such a stir, attracts so much attention.

7. wot, know.

10 mew'd up, confined. The mews were the cages in which hawks were confined when they moulted (Latin, *mutare*) or changed their feathers Afterwards the term came to include the neighbouring stables in which horses were confined

12 Look you, a phrase giving a familiar tone to the conversation.

14. oriel window, a projecting window enclosing a recess.

16. upon the latch, fastened with a catch and not locked.  
 20 pinked out with cloth of gold, ornamented by cutting the edges so as to show behind a pattern in cloth of gold.  
 26. mercer, cloth merchant  
     smirking laugh, a contemptuous term for the affected laugh of a self-satisfied fop  
 31 bandy, crooked.  
 32 dapper, neat  
 33 jerkin, short jacket.

P. 4, l. 1 cordovan, from Cordova in Spain, which was then famous for its goatskin leather.

    simpering, much the same as 'smirking' above  
     what-d'ye-lack (what do you want). The phrase continually in the mouth of apprentices soliciting custom is here used as an epithet. Compare Gilbert's

    "A pushing young particle, what's the next article,  
     Howell and James, young man "

- 9 sarsenet (etymologically *Saracen* cloth), a soft, silken material.  
 17. palfrey, small saddle horse such as ladies ride.  
 21. promise, assure.  
 22 quaint, unusual.  
 27 murrey taffeta, a thin, glossy silk.  
     laid down, covered by way of ornament.  
     guarded, ornamented, trimmed  
 31. garnished, ornamented.

P. 5, l. 5. special, used here as an adverb = especially.

6. inlaid, ornamented by the insertion of pieces of some other material

9. parcel, partly, here an adverb modifying 'twisted.'  
 15. give her, etc., say 'good day' to her.  
 16 puckered, wrinkled.  
 17. jackanape. See p 171, l. 2.  
 21. cudgel, heavy stick.  
 22. thine, according to the practice of Elizabethan English, is used before vowels, 'thy' before consonants.  
 26. advanced, raised.  
 27. laying on, delivering blows, as in Macaulay's *Lays*:  
     "I will lay on for Tusculum,  
     And lay thou on for Rome."  
 29 only for, etc., if the lady had not been present.  
 31. out upon thee, fie upon thee, a reproachful exclamation.

P 6, l 8 sack (French *sec*, dry), the dry Spanish wine of which Falstaff was so fond.

9. out of, deficient in.

10 Hollands, linen made in Holland.

angels, old English coins with the Archangel Michael stamped on them

19. Good. now, my kinsman, now, my good kinsman 'Now' here expresses a mild remonstrance. For 'good' before 'my,' compare p. 7, l 23.

21. interest, influence

in lavender, out of the way of doing mischief, like cloth protected against moths by being laid in lavender.

23. town-stocks, a framework in which the limbs of criminals were fastened. Specimens of stocks have been preserved in several old English towns.

25 pinfold. The pound or pinfold was an enclosure in which stray animals were shut up. The stocks were often in or near the pound.

30 shelled pea-cod, or pod of a pea, is an example of something utterly worthless. The fool calls Lear a "shelled peas-cod," when he has given away his kingdom.

P. 7, l 5 trout tickled. Trout caught by the hand are first tickled, and then firmly grasped. Lambourne's enterprise resembled this operation in the difficulty and skill required for success. It was in colloquial language a 'ticklish job' that he had undertaken.

11. reason tottered on her throne, he was hardly capable of reasonable thought or action. The throne of reason is the mind.

15. chop logic, engage in argumentative controversy.

17. ravelled, entangled.

18. galloon, braid of silk thread used for trimming.

21. chamberlain, the servant in charge of the rooms.

22. sleep himself sober, make himself sober by sleeping. 'Sleep' is here used as a transitive verb, and 'sober' expresses the result of its action. Compare such sentences as 'Heat me those irons hot.'

23. good mine host. 'Mine' and 'host' were so often used together that they came to be treated as one noun, and so the adjective was put before the possessive. Compare *milord* in French. For 'mne' instead of 'my,' see p 5, l. 22

27. abide by his wager, be firm in holding to his bet.

28. For well, with regard to his health. What follows shows that he was in good health.

P 8, l. 2. muscadine, muscatel, sweet wine made of the muscat grape. Tea and coffee were not established as breakfast beverages until a long time after the time of Elizabeth.

5. culish, strong broth like beef-tea.

6. tone, healthy state.

14. **whimpering into one ear.** For the internal dialogue compare 1 *Henry IV.*, the end of the first scene of Act V.

18. **Black Bear.** This was the sign of Gosling's inn.

19. **challenged a reckoning, disputed a bill**

20 **scot and lot,** expresses full payment of taxes for municipal expenditure.

21. **instant, present time**  
**head-borough, parish officer**

22. **guest of guests, superexcellent guest, model of all that a guest should be.**

23 **swasher, swash buckler, swaggerer, bully.**  
**desperate Dick, desperado, bravo**

28. **shall, not a misprint for 'shalt,' but a Scotticism.** Compare 'thou'll' in the quotation from Burns on p. 91, l. 19.

**forewarned, forearmed.** According to the proverb "forewarned is forearmed"

**so, provided that, if.**

P. 9, l 1. **This Foster,** a redundant subject repeated by the pronoun 'he'

6. **on-hanger, servile dependent.**

10. **bedizened, gaudily ornamented.**

24. **beauty of the bar, pretty barmaid.** Abstract for concrete.

P. 10, l. 2 **forfeit, what is to be paid in case of failure.**

10 **demesne, domain, estate**

23. **shafted, with shafts (slender columns) as side posts**

P. 11, l 1. **sour-visaged, with an ill-tempered face** Shakespeare calls war grim-visaged (*Rich. III*, I. i. 9).

2. **reconnoitred, surveyed them** The word is generally used in a military sense of examining the position of the enemy or an expected battlefield.

**square hole, etc., a wicket.**

9. **bolt and bar.** A bolt is drawn back with a key (see p. 24, l. 33), a bar with the hand.

19. **inauspicious, unpromising, forbidding.**

22. **as to border on deformity, that he was almost deformed.**

26. **nice and curious, fastidious and careful**

31. **elf-locks, tangled masses of hair.** Such disorder was supposed to be due to the agency of elves or fairies.

32. **unprepossessing countenance, face that does not, when first seen, produce a favourable impression**

P. 12, l. 11. **buff belt, a belt of yellow leather made of buffalo's hide.**

26 ingle, friend, comrade

29 how fares it with you for many a long year, how has it fared, how has fortune treated you? Here, as in Latin and Elizabethan English, the present, instead of the perfect, is used of something that went on in the past up to the present. So Ophelia asks Hamlet, "How does your honour for this many a day?"

31 gossip, familiar companion. The word was once 'god sib,' i.e. related through God as spouses are.

P. 13, l. 9 *Voto a Dios* is a low Spanish execration.

11 gallows bird. These terms of abuse mean that Lambourne was such a ruffian that he was sure to be often in prison, and would end by being hanged.

13 countenance, favour.

14 whose neck, etc., who is not in danger of being hanged. As criminals were hanged at Tyburn, a Tyburn tippet is a halter. A tippet is a cape round the top of a coat.

20 indescribable, not very clear, mysterious.

23 the odds that I do not, the chances against.

P. 14, l. 5. ratsbane, poison for rats

6. the stage play, *King Lear*, III. iv. 55.

14. backbiters, secret detractors.

17. abide us, wait for us

20. worthy, often, as here, ironical

22 dilapidation, falling into ruin. Derived from Latin *di*, apart, and *lapis*, a stone; it meant literally the separation of one stone in a building from another.

P. 15, l. 8. *yeoman's service*, good service, as the English yeoman or small land owner had a high reputation for the good work he did in war and peace

13. commodities, goods.

14. such offices, such base uses as scouring pewter and cleaning boots

16. mumping, mumbling, presumably for want of teeth.

17. the nineteenthly, the nineteenth division. The successive parts of long Puritan services are often introduced by ordinal adverbs, as 'firstly,' 'secondly,' 'thirdly,' . . . 'lastly.'

20 *Gad-a-mercy*, a corruption of 'God have mercy,' is here merely an expression of surprise

*Master Tony Fire the Fagot*. By addressing him under this title, he tersely points out the inconsistency between Foster's Puritan sentiments and his conduct in Queen Mary's reign. 'Master' is mock politeness. (See p. 199, l. 18)

25. violent death has a double meaning. It not only expresses the sudden end of the comradeship, but also suggests that it may be due to Lambourne being killed by Foster.



28 heretical, Protestant as opposed to Roman Catholic.

30 gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. See *Acts*, viii 23. This is how he describes his condition while he was still a Roman Catholic.

32 kept the clothes See *Acts*, vii 58.

P. 16, l. 1<sup>r</sup> prithee peace, I pray thee, be silent

3. devil quote Scripture. In the *Merchant of Venice*, I iii. 99, Antonio remarks that "the devil can cite Scripture for his purpose."

21. as round a sum, means 'as large an amount of money,' because large sums are counted in round numbers

22 slop-pouch, trouser-pocket

33. covetousness bursts the sack, the covetous man often becomes poorer through his covetousness, as when one tries to put too much grain into a sack.

P. 17, l. 3. lyme-hound, blood hound.

5. gaze-hound, a hound that follows game by sight and not by scent

9. long-breathed, long-winded, like an animal that runs a long way without being tired.

14. in couples, together.

15. currish... whelp. Foster keeps up the metaphor started by Lambourne.

20 Sir Knight. Lambourne speaks as if they were two knights in an old romance conversing together.

21. traverse, oppose.

26. prefer, promote.

30. justice-books, records of the law showing that Lambourne had often been a bold, dexterous, and unscrupulous ruffian.<sup>6</sup>

P. 18, l. 1. impenetrable to shame, shameless.

Milan visor, front part of a helmet made in Milan. Italy was famous for the manufacture of armour. Marmion was

"armed from head to heel

In mail and plate of Milan steel."

6. seven sleepers, seven young Ephesian Christians, who took refuge in a cave and slept there 230 years<sup>7</sup>

11. Papistrie, adherence to the Pope, a contemptuous term for Roman Catholicism.

exterior man, dress and appearance.

12. too irregular to become, so irregular that it would not become, i.e. befit, suit.

17. trunk-hose, baggy breeches covering the thighs and part of the trunk.

18. meeting, assembly for service in a meeting-house or chapel. This would be better, as Leicester sought the support of the Puritans.

19. upon your faith, as opposed to blasphemous oaths or oaths that savoured of Papistry, such as Foster himself sometimes utters inadvertently. See p. 19, l. 3.

20 swashing, swaggering

22 carnal weapon, the material sword as opposed to the 'sword of the spirit'

26. ruffle it, play the fine gentleman.

P. 19, l 4 forgetting his Protestantism. See p. 18, l 19.

22 reverie, train of thought.

P 20, l 4 bower in the old ballads commonly means the ladies' apartment, as distinguished from the hall or public reception rooms

play the masquer, appear in disguise like one who takes part in a masquerade.

14. overcome by his deep feelings so that he could not speak.

P 21, l 10 within twelve hours from hence, in less than twelve hours from the present time. 'Hence' is here used in a temporal sense as in 'henceforward.' 'From' is unnecessary, as 'hence' by itself means 'from now.'

22 pageants, vain shows.

30. contract, engagement to be married

P. 22, l. 17 sphere, rank, position in society This use was originally a metaphor from the Ptolemaic doctrine of the spheres.

29. deign, condescend to give.

30. enough. He concludes from her refusal to reply that she is not married

P. 23, l 22\* out of bounds, beyond the prescribed limit, that is to say, outside the apartments appropriated to Amy's use.

26. costard, the name of a large apple. used humorously for the head.

30. cutter's law regulates the relations between highwaymen and other desperate characters Another such rule is mentioned in *Woodstock*: "When one tall fellow has coin another must not be thirsty."

P. 24, l. 5. proper gear, a fine state of affairs: ironical for 'an embarrassing situation.'

12. strain courtesies, be scrupulously polite.

13. coxcomb, fool, because professional fools used to wear on their heads a piece of jagged red cloth like a cock's comb

19 withal, with, governs 'whom' understood. 'Withal' is used by Shakespeare for 'with' at the end of a clause.

clean, absolutely, entirely.

24. avenue, passage leading to a house.

33. muffled, wrapt up and concealed.

P 25, l 20. *methinks*, it seems to me 'Thinks' and 'thought' in 'methinks' and 'methought' come from an old English verb meaning 'seem.'

33 he *hazarded the receiving one*, he ran the risk of receiving one As 'receiving' here governs an object ('one'), it should not follow the definite article We should say either 'hazarded receiving one' or 'the receiving of one'

P 26, l 22. *fox*, sword.

23. *grows for us*, is impatient for our return.

24. *abject*, base creature

29. *morning's draught*. See p. 24, l 18.

31. *shag*, begone.

P. 27, l 3. *nobles*, gold coins valued at 6s 8d.

(*Varney informs Amy that her husband is on his way to Cumnor.*)

9. *quadrangle*, buildings in the form of a square

14 *dissolved*, broken up at the time of the dissolution of monasteries

21. *got abroad*, became generally known

25. *suite*, succession.

P. 28, l 6 *landing-place*, level floor at the top of a flight of stairs  
*antechamber*, a room in front of (Latin, *ante*) another room.

9. *wainscoted*, lined with boards  
*dark foreign wood*, mahogany

20 *sconces*, candlesticks generally attached to walls

22 *chandelier*, a branched frame to hold a number of lights

27. *withdrawing-room*, now shortened to 'drawing room,' room to which the company retire after dinner

29 *Phaeton*, more correctly spelled Phaethon, the son of the sun-god, Apollo.

33. *canopy*, curtain overhanging a seat of state.

P. 29, l 3 *seed-pearl*, small pearls like seeds

4. *countess*. This is the title given to the wife of an earl.

P. 30, l 5. *contend with life*, rival living beings.

6. *plate*, here a collective term for vessels made of precious metals.

7. *galleons of Spain*, conveying to Europe precious plate from the Spanish colonies in the New World, were often captured and plundered by English ships

23. *crisping*.. pins give hair a wavy appearance.

33. *I ha<sup>ve</sup> more of, <sup>it</sup> look more like.*

P. 31, l 3. *tendrils*, shoots by which the vine attaches itself to its supports.

18 pencilled, traced, not by art, but by nature. 'Pencil' in Tudor English meant a paintbrush.

29. I could tell Varney appears to have treacherously made love to Amy on his own account.

(Varney strongly advises Amy to say nothing to her husband about her meeting with Tressilian, but she scornfully refuses to follow his advice.)

P. 33, l. 13 inly, inward. The word is used as an adjective up to the seventeenth century.

17. russet-brown, reddish-brown

33. spell over, go through the details of.

P. 34, l. 9. renowned as it was. Compare the last stanza but one of Grey's *Bard*

22 the Diamond George. The Knights of the Garter wore a gold enamelled medallion of St George and the Dragon suspended from a blue ribbon. Leicester's jewel was ornamented with diamonds.

32. lowest, because Thomas Manners was created Earl of Rutland in 1525. Leicester became an Earl in 1563.

P. 35, l. 5 fusilles, fire-stones, stones from which fire may be struck

13. Saint Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland. A relic of his was according to the legend landed at the Scottish town afterwards called St Andrews.

15. young widow of France, Mary, Queen of Scots, whose first husband, Francis II. of France, had died in 1560. The last James of Scotland was James V., father of Queen Mary.

26. indifferently, fairly, moderately. litotes for 'very.'

P. 36, l. 4 matronage, a collective term for 'matrons,' like 'baronage' for 'barons.'

20 overcast, clouded. A cloudy brow is a sign of a troubled mind

33 have so, should be 'have that,' i.e. your approbation. The adverb 'so' cannot be the object of the transitive verb 'have.'

P. 37, l. 15. congregation of worshippers at a meeting-house.

18. punctilious solicitude, anxious observance of minute points of behaviour.

26. do on, sometimes contracted into 'don' (cf. 'doff'), put on.

27 flowered with silk, embroidered with silk flowers.

23 sables, black fur of a kind of weasel found in the north of Europe.

P 38, l. 13. my father. The Duke of Northumberland, who formed the audacious plan of making Lady Jane Grey, wife of his fourth son, succeed Edward VI instead of Mary.

19. **gather cockle-shells.** Varney, to ridicule Leicester's idea of retiring from Court, describes it in language applicable to the play of little children

**Dan** (Latin *dominus*, lord), a title prefixed to the names of monks and other persons in medieval English

33. **It will not be Richard Varney.** By this negative sentence Varney insinuates that Leicester "will incur the displeasure of majesty."

P 39, l 14. **the sun**, the favour of Elizabeth.

16. **is now**, according to the supposition

23. **a road is opened.** The suggestion is that Leicester, as the most powerful baron, might as kingmaker become practically the ruler of England or might even succeed to the throne.

25. **hob**, the level surface of the grate on either side of the fire

29. **look babies**, etc., gaze at your own image reflected in your wife's eyes.

P 40, l. 7. **portmantie**, another form of 'portmanteau.'

12. **the patriot must subdue the husband**, a husband's love must not stand in the way of his duty to his country

18. **parry**, turn aside, resist. The metaphor is from fencing.

21. **cymar**, loose robe.

24. **midnight coif**, nightcap.

P. 41, l. 25. **no one.** Here Amy is frightened into telling a lie, like Desdemona when she denies the loss of the handkerchief (*Othello*, III. iv.) In a previous interview with Varney she had declared that she would not conceal Tressilian's visit from her husband. This concealment was afterwards used by Varney as evidence of Amy's guilt. See p. 140, l. 27.

P. 42, l. 1. **Trevanion.** He contemptuously pretends to forget his rival's name

8. **coronet**, a small or inferior coronet worn by nobles.

21. **Radcliffe**, the surname of the Earl of Sussex.

P. 44, l. 4. **seen him.** She is sounding him to see whether she can venture to tell him of her meeting with Tressilian.

10. **the bear.** He compares himself to the bear, because his badge or cognizance was the bear and ragged staff. See. p. 74, l. 8

15. **an early day**, an early time of the day. So in Latin *summus mons* means the top of the mountain.

25. **to the letter**, exactly.

(*Varney engages the services of Lambourne.* Tressilian meanwhile has started for Amy's home, Lincote Hall in Devonshire. In the dark he loses his way and his horse a shoe. Guided by a boy called Dickie Sludge, he finds Wayland, a smith supposed to be gifted with magical

powvers, who shoes his horse and accompanies him to Lindcot Hall. After a stay of twenty-four hours he starts with Wayland for London, bearing a warrant from Sir Hugh Robsart to act on behalf of his daughter Amy. He finds his patron, the Earl of Sussex, afflicted with a mysterious malady, which Wayland cures. While the Earl is asleep under Wayland's treatment, Masters, the court physician, sent by the Queen to visit the sick noble, is refused admittance by Raleigh.)

29 young follower, Walter Raleigh.

P. 45, l. 19. banner of England, three leopards of gold courant (running) on a red field, not yet united with the red lion rampant of Scotland on a field of gold

23 halberds, spears with points and cutting blades

30 sergeant porters, gate-keepers with the rank of non-commissioned officers.

P. 46, l. 1. as much as his post was worth. He might be punished by the loss of his post if he did not exactly obey the commands he had received

11. Gentlemen Pensioners, a bodyguard of gentlemen established by Henry VIII.

15 what in a Sovereign, etc. Courtiers and poets, *e.g.* Raleigh and Spenser, gratified her vanity by fulsome flattery of her looks, because she was a queen

16. cavalier. The term etymologically means horseman, but was applied to any soldier who was a gentleman in rank

28. suited. 'Suit,' usually a transitive verb, is here intransitive in the sense of 'agree.'

P. 48, l. 12. gallant, courtier. The term suggests devotion to the fair sex

P. 49, l. 7. awning, a cloth overhead for protection against the sun and the rain.

26. hege-man, subject.

32. supply, provide a substitute for.

P. 50, l. 5. if it became me, if I might without impropriety make a choice.

P. 51, l. 18. some such, some kind of excuse.

21. within hearing, near enough to hear.

P. 52, l. 7. comfortable, imparting comfort, as in the Bible, *e.g.* *Zechariah*, i. 13.

16. repelled. For euphony the suffix of the second person singular of the preterite is sometimes omitted. So in Shelley's *Skylark*:

"Thou lovest, but ne'er knew love's sad satiety."

24. unapacability, incapability to be appeased.  
our country, Devonshire.

25 hege sovereign, lawful sovereign. 'Liege,' expressing the relation between a feudal superior and his vassals, could be applied either as here to a ruler, or as in p. 49, l. 26 to a faithful subject

27. leech, a physician Owing to the frequency with which physicians prescribed bleeding, 'leech' came to mean a blood-sucking worm.

30 varlet of an empire, rascally quack Here the genitive with 'of' is equivalent to a noun in apposition. Compare 'dog of a Jew.'

P 53, l. 7. in the multitude, etc. *Proverbs*, xi. 14.

14 in Ireland. This is an anachronism, as Raleigh did not go to Ireland until 1580

P 54, l. 5. intuitively, immediately by nature, as opposed to learning by study and experience.

16. withal, moreover.

27. muster, example, pattern.

gipsy. Sussex on his deathbed predicted that the gipsy, i. e. Leicester, would get the better of his followers Leicester had a dark complexion

P. 55, l. 19. presence-chamber, the room in which kings and other great persons receive company.

21. stately, here an adverb = 'stately'

24 formal, merely ceremonious, as the bow did not express real friendliness

26. of older creation. His grandfather had been created Earl of Sussex by Henry VIII. in 1529

27. reverence, bow as a mark of respect.

P 56, l. 21 these are no terms, such words should not be spoken before your sovereign.

P 57, l. 7 taste of our Tower fare, euphemism for imprisonment in the Tower of London.

26. Nonsuch, a palace in Surrey built by Henry VIII.

P. 58, l. 1 castaway, outcast, abandoned woman.

16. would climb the eagle's nest. The metaphor expresses Leicester's high-reaching ambition.

P. 59, l. 12. trim, put in order. Varney was like a captain threatened by a storm, who does not know from what quarter the wind will blow.

16. skilful pilot in extremity, from Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, where Shaftesbury (Achtophel) is called "a daring pilot in extremity."

27. contrition, distress due to consciousness of sin.

love passages. What Varney says is literally true, though it is intended to produce a wrong impression, and is therefore really a lie.

P 60, l. 2. sealed his lips, kept him silent.

26. never yields. See the passage quoted from Shakespeare on p. 76

P. 61, l. 10 fair work : ironical for 'disgraceful action.'

P 62, l. 12. his own man, master of himself.

32. wrought by Minerva. Minerva was the goddess of weaving. She wove cloth in competition with Arachne, who was changed into a spider.

P. 63, l. 11 like the thread. Her repetition of the two similes shows how much she was pleased with them.

25 go to in Shakespearean English was a jesting reproach, much as we sometimes use 'get away.' 'To' = 'on.'

P 64, l. 4. summoned himself, collected his faculties so that they might not fail him in the crisis.

11. decided his triumph, made it manifest

13. of this same Varney. Compare p 52, l. 30.

28 last words. Her first words made him fear that Varney had betrayed his secret.

P. 65, l. 7. shone on him, glorified him with your favour.

15. despoiled of your hereditary rank, in 1553, when his father, the Duke of Northumberland, was executed for treason

P. 66, l 15. unabashed, showing no signs of confusion at having to appear before the Queen.

P. 67, l 16 Matamoros is a Spanish word meaning 'Killers of Moors,' applied in the comic drama to men who boasted of imaginary Moors they had killed, brawling braggarts.

P 68, l. 31. Paris and Menelaus. As Paris deprived Menelaus of his beloved wife Helen, Elizabeth compares Varney to Paris, Tressilian to Menelaus, and Amy to Helen.

P. 69, l. 14. compeers, equals

17. anterooms, rooms in front of the principal apartment.

25. golden opinions, from *Macbeth*, I. vii. 33.

P. 70, l. 6. derogation. The Queen would have lowered her dignity if she had by her tone of voice revealed how much she was annoyed.

14. clouds of defamation, calumny obscuring the truth.

21. Esculapius, the god of medicine.

P 71, l. 21. stands godfather, comes forward to make this request for him. The godfather at baptism represents the infant, and speaks for him, promising in his name to lead a Christian life.

24. skenes. knives.



25. **MacDonough.** The name survives in MacDonough's Folly, near Cork, an Elizabethan castle the completion of which was prevented by the English Government

31. **yonder royal palace.** Greenwich Palace, which, in the reign of William and Mary, became a hospital for aged sailors

P. 72, l 18. **stout, valiant.**

**quarter-staff,** a staff held at a quarter of its length from the end  
**single falchion,** single combat with a short broadsword It is characteristic of the rough soldier to speak of the author of Lear and Othello as if his reputation mainly depended on his manual dexterity.

19. **having, lame.** Shakespeare in *Sonnet XXXVII.* describes himself as "made lame by Fortune's dearest spite," which may be a reference to physical lameness.

21. **broke, trespassed in.**

23. **cry you mercy, ask your pardon.**

31. as if the lines sounded to boot and saddle, as if they were bugles calling on cavalry to mount their horses

P. 73, l. 1. **What are half a dozen knaves.** In *Henry V.*, Chorus in Act IV laments that the actors must much disgrace the name of Agincourt

"With four or five most vile and ragged foils  
 Right ill-disposed in brawl ridiculous."

2. **targets, small shields**

7. **bearwards, keepers of bears.**

10. **bombast, high-sounding language,** from a low Latin word meaning cotton, because clothes were stuffed out with cotton

14. **pinky eyes, or pink eyes, are small eyes.** Murray quotes a passage referring to "pink eyes as black as jet"

16. **venture within his danger, risk getting into his clutches** Here 'danger' means 'power to hurt,' as in the *Merchant of Venice*, IV. i 180:

"You stand within his danger, do you not?"

21. **policies of war, rules of the art of war.** These rules were neglected in the famous charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava, on which a French general remarked, '*C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre.*'

22. **crack.** Strict grammar requires 'cracks.'

25. **nether, lower.**

26. **slaver, saliva, spittle.**

27. **Sir Talbot, the mastiff.**

P. 74, l. 8. **bear and ragged staff** See p 44. l. 10.

20. **agape, with astonishment.**

21. **play artificers, playwrights, makers of plays.**

31 profane and lewd expressions. In 1605, through Puritan influence, a statute was passed against profane language in plays.

P. 75, l 4. the godly. Puritan gravity was often ridiculed on the stage.

13 his Chronicles In the quarto edition *Henry V* is entitled "the Chronicle History of Henry the Fifth."

16 the generation which may succeed : a very modest prophecy of Shakespeare's posthumous popularity intended to indicate how limited was the appreciation of his greatness in his own time.

24 Philip Sidney (1554-1586), son of the sister of Leicester, who therefore speaks of him familiarly by his Christian name. He took part in the revels at Kenilworth, but Scott makes no mention of his being there.

26 in a mad tale of fairies, namely in the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*.

29 they bear, etc., they daringly refer. The subject was the glory of Elizabeth.

31 tantalize us, provoke us by bringing before our imagination pleasure beyond our reach. Tantalus was punished, according to Greek mythology, by the sight of grapes and water which eluded him when he tried to eat and drink them.

P. 76, l 20. Oberon, King of the Fairies.

24 vestal. The vestals at Rome were the priestesses of Vesta. As they took vows of celibacy, 'vestal' is here used as an equivalent to 'virgin,' and the term is therefore applicable to Elizabeth, the "Virgin Queen."

29 votress, bound by a vow. Elizabeth is called a votress because she is regarded as bound, like the vestals, by a vow to remain a virgin.

30. fancy, love, as in the song in the *Merchant of Venice* :

"Tell me where is fancy bred"

33 might receive it. She might resent being regarded as a vestal if she were determined to marry Leicester.

P. 77, l 14. dropt into the Thames. Nevertheless, Elizabeth was very fond of bear-baiting, and in 1591 the Privy Council prohibited the exhibition of plays on Thursdays, because that day of the week had usually been devoted to such pastimes "which are maintained for her Majesty's pleasure."

P. 78, l. 7. the flattery of his own imagination. Perhaps he over-estimated the impression he had made on the heart of Elizabeth.

24 riveted, firmly fixed. A rivet is a small metal bolt used to fasten things together.

33. Lack-Cloak, formed on the analogy of 'Lacklands,' the surname given to King John.

P. 79, l. 26 **sacrifice to the Muses.** As the Muses were the goddesses of poetry, those who wrote verse might be regarded as offering sacrifice or burning incense to the Muses

30 **Parnassus**, a mountain in Greece haunted by the nine Muses.

P. 80, l. 1. **exorable to**, capable of being moved by the entreaty of. The negative form 'inexorable' is much more common.

17. **with the flight of a lapwing**, by a secret circuitous route. The lapwing, to conceal its nest, does not go straight to it, but, pretending to be wounded, leads the spectator in another direction. See *Much Ado About Nothing*, II. i. 24

19 **her train had taken**, her plot had not failed.

25 **mortal reservation**, an exception not expressed in words, but resolved upon in her mind

(*Varney sends Alasco to Cumnor Hall to administer drugs to Amy so as to render her incapable of attempting to escape from her confinement there. Wayland sent to Cumnor gains admission to the Hall disguised as a pedlar, and provides an antidote to Alasco's drugs. Varney, with Leicester's permission, goes to Cumnor Hall to persuade Amy to be called Mrs. Varney at Kenilworth. Amy is highly indignant at the proposal, and refuses Alasco's potion proffered by Foster. Afterwards she takes it from the hand of Varney and drinks it, but, owing to Wayland's antidote, it does her no harm. Then with the assistance of Janet Foster she leaves Cumnor Hall and starts for Kenilworth escorted by Wayland. With difficulty they gain admittance to the Castle, and Wayland finds a room for Amy, where she writes a letter for Wayland to deliver to Leicester. The room in which Amy has found refuge happens to be Tressilian's apartment. Tressilian, coming in, promises at her urgent request not to interfere in her affairs for twenty-four hours.*)

P. 81, l. 10. **a-broach**, pierced with a tap so that the ale may run out.

20 **chase**, hunting ground occupied by deer.

23. **far heard.** Cf. *Marmion*, II. xxxiii. 20.

P. 82, l. 7. **round**, volley.

**salvo**, salute.

**small arms**, muskets.

15 **the open and fair avenue** led through the chase to the strong tower defending the entrance to the bridge, twenty feet wide and seventy feet long, across the lake on the south of the castle. This bridge was specially constructed that Elizabeth might go into the castle by a new entrance. It was also to serve as a tilt-yard, and the tower defending it on the outside was called the Gallery-tower, because it was provided with a gallery from which the ladies might watch the tournament

18. **cavalcade**, procession of horses.

26. **daughter of an hundred kings**, descendant of a long line of kings. Tennyson's Lady Clara is the "daughter of a hundred earls"

P. 83, l. 7. like a golden image. In *Henry VIII* the French on the Field of the Cloth of Gold are described as "all clinquant all in gold like heathen gods."

9. **Master of the Horse**, a high official who had charge of the horse of a sovereign or noble. Leicester was Master of the Horse to Elizabeth, and himself had Varney as his Master of the Horse.

quality, rank

P. 84, l. 21. worm that dieth not *Mark*, ix. 44

P. 85, l. 2 **Mortimer's Tower** commanded the south-east entrance to the castle grounds. It derived its name from Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, who lodged there in the reign of Edward I, or from Sir John Mortimer, who was imprisoned there in the reign of Henry V.

10 **Tritons**, sea-gods, especially a son of Neptune famous for the trumpet notes he blew on his shell.

**Nereids**, daughters of Nereus, sea-goddesses.

12 the lake was a sheet of water half a mile long and about a hundred yards broad.

**heronry**, a place for breeding herons

16. **watchet-coloured**, light blue, the natural colour for deities of the sea. See *Comus*, 29

17 **characters**, letters or figures

**phylacteries**, strips of parchment worn by Jews on the forehead. They were so called from a Greek word meaning 'guard,' because the texts from the Bible inscribed on them were supposed to be a protection. See *Matthew*, xxiii. 5.

31. **Lady of the Lake**, who educated Sir Lancelot du Lac in her home beneath a lake.

P. 86, l. 18. **base-court**, outer court in front of the castle.

26 **chandelier**, branched candlestick

P. 87, l. 2. **canopy** (from the Greek for 'mosquito curtain') a covering over the head of anyone sitting on a throne.

4. **suite** (French), set of rooms

33. **upper stocks**, what we call knickerbockers.

P. 88, l. 2. **slashed**, with slits through which the lining was visible.

3. **jerkin**, waistcoat.

4. **seed-pearl**, small pearls

P. 89, l. 15. **party**, person. The term is commonly applied to an individual in legal language

22 **bestowed**, placed.

P. 90, l. 15. **impeach**, attack, impugn. Here the uninflected verb expresses indignation

made strongly against him, produced a powerful unfavourable impression.

P 91, l 3 **text hand**, large handwriting such as is used in legal documents

19. **lists**, a Scotticism for 'listest' Compare Burns —

"Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird  
- That sings upon the bough  
Thou minds me o' the happy days,  
When my fause Luvie was true."

and Tennyson's *Northern Farmer* —

"She's a beauty thou thinks"

28 **unthrift**, prodigal

31. **franklin**, a small landowner

P. 92, l. 4. **Say's Court**, the London residence of the Earl of Sussex

22 **uncleansed boots**. Tressilian was in his riding-dress and boots instead of being dressed for the occasion like the other courtiers The Earl of Essex once offended Elizabeth by appearing before her in a similar state of undress on his return from Ireland.

**withal**, in addition.

30. **collected himself**, recovered his composure.

P. 93, l. 15 **Harrington**. Sir John Harrington translated into English Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (Mad Orlando)

P. 94, l. 12. **very**, here an adjective meaning 'actual.'

13 **Pindaric**, highly imaginative Pindar was famous for the boundless flights of his imagination on account of which Gray describes him as an eagle "sailing with supreme dominion through the azure deep of air"

16. **Parnassus**, the mountain on which the Muses dwelt

**Saint Luke's Hospital**, an asylum for the insane, but not really founded until a later date.

31 **mounted**, placed, set

P. 95, l. 18. **your sword**, object of 'give' understood.

24 **damasked**, damascened, inlaid with gold or silver.

30 **Harrington**. See note on p. 93, l. 15. Scott gives a translation of the passage in the *Orlando Innamorato* (Orlando in Love) of Boiardo, where a fairy is described:

"Robed in a loose cymar of lily white,  
And on her lap a sword of breadth and might,  
In whose broad blade, as in a mirror bright,  
Like maid that trims her for a festal night,  
The fairy deck'd her hair, and placed her coronet aright"

P. 96, l. 15. **coucher** (French, lie down), going to bed, the opposite of *lever* (rise) whence comes the noun 'levee'

22. **abate you**, lower your dignity.

P. 97, l. 9. **abutting**, jutting out, projecting.

23. prickers, mounted huntsmen.

30 gesticulation, movements expressing passion.

P. 98, l. 6. refuse, worthless remains of fireworks, such as the stick to which a rocket was attached. Compare 'go up like a rocket and come down like the stick' The noun 'refuse' is distinguished from the verb by having the accent on the first syllable

12. my horoscope, the aspect of the heavens bearing on my fortune.

18. Saul among the prophets (1 *Samuel*, x. 11), an expression of surprise used when one who is regarded as a sceptic speaks or acts like a believer.

23. by my wish, because often, according to the proverb, "the wish is father to the thought." 2 *Henry IV.* v. 93.

25 influence, as an astrological term, means the power that flows from the heavenly bodies and determines human fortunes.

27. combust. Planets are combust (*comburo*, consume with fire) when so near the sun as to be invisible, retrograde when they move from east to west.

32. doff, do off, put off, opposite of 'don,' do on.

33. too burdensome to your knighthood, too much to expect from you now that you are a knight.

P. 99, l. 3. remain an instant. Cf. *Richard III.* I. iv. 73.

5. officiously, dutifully. The word has now acquired a bad sense and implies the rendering of service that is not wanted.

22. Put not thy trust in Princes. *Psalms*, cxlv. 3.

26. hooded. Hawks remained with their eyes covered on the falconer's wrist until it was time for them to be let loose and go after their prey.

P. 100, l. 25. The ruling party in Scotland, the party of the Earl of Morton.

P. 101, l. 8. once more your own, so that you can give it in marriage to whomsoever you please.

23. stark-mad, absolutely mad. Compare 'stark-naked.'

26. estate of freehold, property free of duty.

27. left-handed, sometimes called morganatic, marriages are legitimate, but do not give wife and children the rights secured by a regular marriage. In such marriages the bridegroom gave his left instead of his right hand to the bride.

P. 102, l. 10. Don Philip, Philip King of Spain who married Mary Queen of England.

14. Eleanor and Fair Rosamond are here common terms meaning persons resembling Eleanor and fair Rosamond. Fair Rosamond, the mistress of Henry II., was kept at Goslston, near Oxford, in a bower the approach to which was by an intricate maze. Unfortunately the jealous Queen Eleanor found the clue to the maze, and,

going in, offered Rosamond the choice of poison or a knife to end her life.

17 **Mervyn's Bower.** This name is given by Scott, seemingly without authority, to a tower on the north-west angle of the castle generally called the Strong Tower. He says that a prisoner called Mervyn was murdered there.

P 103, l. 1. **argue herself into**, convince herself by argument of

P 104, l. 4 **tiaras**, lofty head-dresses, such as were worn by the ancient Persians, are, perhaps not quite appropriately, described as *shrouding*, i.e. enveloping the towers.

6. **the opposing element**, water.

P 105, l. 7. **reveille** (French imperative 'awake'), a bugle call to rouse soldiers or huntsmen at daybreak. The poetical equivalent of such a call will be found in Scott's *Hunting Song*, "Waken, lords and ladies gay."

20. **ineffable**, so great that it could not be expressed in words.

P. 106, l. 32. **the Compter**, prison for debtors.

P 107, l. 4 **have at thee** indicates an intention of attacking the person so addressed.

5 **iron keys**, the symbol of his office as a jailor by which he earned his livelihood. Pieces of iron have been found in the stomachs of ostriches.

20 **the easy alternative**. She could either show herself or remain concealed, and there was no difficulty in pursuing the latter of the two courses.

P 108, l. 6 **capotaine hat**, a close-fitting hat like a cap.

20. **took**, she took. The syntax is irregular. 'Fountain' would naturally be the subject of 'took.'

25 **intercessor**. The repetition of the word is rather awkward. The jewels were to be used, if necessary, as intercessors to win the favour of a human intercessor who might be moved by them to help her to win the favour of some influential person in the castle.

P. 109, l. 7 **which it connected**, which lay between the gardens and the castle-yard. This is not in accordance with the generally accepted plan of the castle grounds.

13. **parterre**, a plot of ground ornamented with flower-beds.

26. **aguillettes** (French), aglets, metal pendants attached to a fringe.

27. **Amazons**, a nation of women warriors celebrated in Greek legend.

29. **conscious rank**, her consciousness of her rank. She did not forget her exalted position as queen.

32. **weeds, clothes.** The word has now become specialised to mean widows' garments worn in mourning

**Lincoln-green,** green cloth made at Lincoln, worn by huntsmen because it made them less distinctly visible in the greenwood.

33 **baldric,** a belt worn across the shoulders by warriors and huntsmen

P 110, l. 8 **base-court,** the outer court in front of the castle.

10 **exhaling,** disappearance by evaporation, which would dissipate the scent

22 **ingredient,** element or component part in a mixture.

24. **with broken accents.** She was so deeply moved that her voice failed her

32 **leave you.** Leicester expresses his wonder at the order by repeating the Queen's words

P 111, l. 3 **from hence.** As 'hence' means 'from here,' the 'from' is redundant and unnecessary.

13 **grotto** (Italian), a cave, generally an artificial cave in pleasure grounds

14 **too successful,** because she had won Leicester's love.

P 111, l. 30 **which occupied.** Such subordination of one relative clause to another should be avoided, as it gives a weak conclusion.

32 **Numa,** the second king of Rome, consulted the nymph Egeria at her fountain about the laws that should be made for his kingdom. See *Childe Harold*, iv. 1027-1071

P. 112, l. 1. **Naiad,** water nymph.

**inspirations,** divine suggestions.

29. **so cunningly,** with such skill

P. 113, l. 6. **instinctively,** involuntarily, without deliberate purpose.

20. **reverse his charm,** annul his magic Elizabeth, instead of simply saying 'Are you frightened,' expresses her meaning in the high-flown style of the old knightly romances ridiculed in *Don Quixote*

P. 114, l. 1. **a forgotten task,** forgetting what you were instructed to say. See p. 113, l. 12.

3 **what she were best to say,** what it would be best for her to say. In the original form of this idiom the person was put in the dative case.

7. **chaos** (Greek), confusion.

15 **we.** Here, as above, Elizabeth as a princess speaks of herself in the plural number. In Elizabethan English 'thou' and 'thee' were used in addressing dear friends, near relations, inferiors, and contemptuously to equals. The polite 'you' could be used in addressing anyone. Scott in *Kenilworth* generally observed this distinction.



25. practised on my life, schemed to put me to death.

29. sift, investigate, examine closely.

P 115, l. 6 wring, extract, force.

20. the theme likes thee, the subject pleases thee. This is the usual meaning of 'like' in Elizabethan English.

26. thou wert better in older English would be 'Thee were better.'  
See note on p. 114, l. 3.

dally, play, trifle.

P. 116, l. 3 set on, instigated, suborned.

4 takes no keep of, has no interest in.

20 arcade, an arched gallery.

P. 117, l. 4. extenuated, emaciated by sickness and sorrow.

16. chasm, the abyss made in the earth by the thunderbolt.

22 intimated, hinted.

25. augur, conjecture. The Roman augurs foretold the future from the flight of birds

29. shot, came suddenly.

P. 118, l. 6. call upon the mountains. Cf. *Luke*, xxiii. 30

10. architrave, the part of a building resting on the capitals of the columns and supporting the frieze.

battlement, a parapet with openings to shoot through.

19. surmises, leads one to suspect, indicates. A rare usage of the word.

21. thy father's. See p. 65, l. 15

24. black. The countenance under stress of emotion may become white or red but hardly black, though we speak of an angry person as looking black.

29. we have ourselves bestowed. Elizabeth gave Kenilworth in 1563 to Robert Lord Dudley and in the following year created him Earl of Leicester.

31. attach him of, arrest him on a charge of.

P. 119, l. 27. privy to, acquainted with something secret.

P. 120, l. 17. saucy, impertinent.

29. open a new scene, alter the situation.

P. 121, l. 10. beshrew me but I, may I be cursed if I do not. The oath was however in such common use that it lost its force and only gave a slight emphasis to what followed.

28. ladybirds of daughters. Compare "varlet of an empire," p. 52, l. 30. 'Ladybird,' the name of a small brightly coloured insect, is here used as a term of endearment.

P. 122, l. 29. **moping**, in a stupid state of melancholy, which is a symptom of madness

31. **rack**. In Elizabeth's time prisoners were forced to confess by the rack and other tortures

P. 125, l. 1. **posted**, travelled with speed.

20. **So lovely**. Similarly Lear exclaims with reference to Cordelia, 'So young and so untender'

24. **post it over**, elude the danger.

26. **the character**, the part which the position of affairs requires her to play, i.e. the rôle of Mrs. Varney.

P. 126, l. 5. **She shall**. Here and in l. 20 'shall' in the third person expresses the speaker's determination.

13 **participate** is generally an intransitive verb followed by 'in.'

18. **Thou art to have**. See p. 126, l. 18.

20 **butts** used as a noun meaning 'objections.'

28. **save obedience**. As Varney had not two courses open to him, obedience was strictly speaking not an alternative

31. **which ... in which**. See note on p. 111, l. 30.

P. 127, l. 7. **votary**, devoted worshipper.

**dead pinch**, trying position, difficult predicament.

10. **dishevelled**, in disorder.

32. **keep its ground before**, resist, remain unmoved by.

P. 128, l. 3. **hers**, her beauty.

21. **express**, distinct, definite.

32. **under the personage**, taking the name and position.

P. 129, l. 10. **one**. Varney had had the audacity to make love to her

21 **to which I gave you title**, which I conferred on you.

P. 130, l. 7. **what she proposes**. This is correctly printed from the MS. But as Amy had made no proposal, Scott evidently intended to write 'opposes'

11. **development**, conclusion.

15. **suspicion**, due to his jealousy of Trevelyan.

P. 131, l. 2. **hypocrisy**, the hypocrisy of Varney who pretended devotion to Leicester and nevertheless made love to Amy.

11. **had fate allowed**. Here the tragedy is heightened by a contrasted glimpse of the happiness that was sacrificed. Whittier well says that

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen

The saddest are these: 'It might have been.'"

, 29. **duphcity**, deceitfulness.

P. 132, l 11 those shades, her father's house.

18 tergiversation, fickle subterfuges

24. meshes, network

31 cannot but be, must be

P. 134, l 3<sup>r</sup> arbitrary, despotic.

5 Norfolk entered into a conspiracy to marry Mary Queen of Scots and bring a Spanish army into England For this he was executed in 1572.

block, the headsman's block, a piece of wood on which criminals were beheaded.

23 must hence, must go hence The verb of motion is understood.

P 135, l 5 are lost. This violates the grammatical rule that two or more singular subjects, joined by ' or,' take the verb in the singular number

9 tablets used as a note-book. So Hamlet exclaims

"My tables! Meet it is I set it down

That one may smile and smile and be a villain "

16. Knollis, Sir Francis Knollys, an Elizabethan statesman who, like his friend Leicester, favoured the Puritans.

17. Horsey, Sir Edward, was captain of the Isle of Wight from 1565 to his death in 1578

18. Huntington, Henry Hastings Earl of Huntington married Catherine, Leicester's sister

Pembroke, Henry Herbert Earl of Pembroke, President of Wales from 1586 to his death His wife was Sidney's sister and Leicester's niece

19. Bedford, Francis Russell Earl of Bedford, like the other possible supporters mentioned by Leicester, was a strong protestant.

21. My brother of Warwick, Ambrose Dudley, Leicester's elder brother, son-in-law of the Earl of Bedford

23. Sir Owen Hopton was at this time Lieutenant of the Tower.

26. had they thus forecast, if they had thought out their plans beforehand.

P 136, l 1. alas, an ejaculation or exclamation intended to invite a demand for explanation.

5. spirit of chivalry supposed to be inspired by his recently acquired knighthood

18 let her call back, if she takes them away again, your power will decay as quickly as Jonah's gourd See *Jonah*, iv 6, 10.

20 declare against, if you profess hostility to. The imperative is often used to express a condition.

26. sentenced, condemned.

27 Norfolk. See p. 134, l. 5.

29 made head, rebelled. ^

P 137, l 10 in Ireland. Leicester does not appear to have been ever in Ireland

11 **Keep**, the strongest part of the castle

16 **Pensioners**. See on p 46, l 11. Now called gentlemen-at-arms

**Yeomen of the Guard**, otherwise called beef-eaters, were established as a body-guard by Henry VIII and still wear the Tudor uniform

31 **oblivion**, forgetfulness

P 138, l 16 It is—. The dash indicates a pause as if Varney shrank from completing his sentence

23. **tampering and trickstering**, underhand intercourse

P. 139, l 8. **been in connivance**, had a secret understanding.

16 **postern-gate**, back gate.

P 140, l. 12 **the wager**. See p 6.

27 tell it. Varney had strongly urged her not to tell Leicester anything about the meeting

P 141, l 3 **rub**, objection to the view that the meeting was harmless A rub in bowls is a roughness in the ground which affects the course of the bowl

5 **an inn**, the Black Bear

6. **emissary**, an agent sent on a secret mission, namely Wayland.

16 **I dare not say**, etc Bacon in his essay on Cunning remarks that "the breaking off in the midst of that one was about to say, as if he took himself up, breeds a greater appetite in him with whom you confer to know more"

23. **paramour**, mistress.

P. 142, l 17. **fellow**, neighbour, the corresponding glove for the other hand.

22. **passages**, transactions Compare 'love passages,' p. 60, l. 10.

33. **trinkets**, intrigues, plots secretly

P 143, l 14. **so young**, etc. Compare *Lear*, I. i. 108, "So young and so untender" Like so many other tragedies, *Kentworth* illustrates Tennyson's lines -

"O purblind race of miserable men,  
How many of us at this very hour  
Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves  
By taking true for false or false for true."

15. **thee**. **you**. Notice the irregular change of number in the pronoun in the same sentence.

P. 144, l. 21. **yet wherefore**, etc Varney hypocritically suggests an argument in favour of Amy's innocence which however he immediately confutes.

28 thou art not fit. In his infatuation he adopts an air of patronising superiority towards the clever villain whose dupe he is

33 had been, etc, would have been an acceptable gift of fortune.

P. 145, l 26 entirely different, because Leicester could not help revealing in his face and in his bearing his mental agony.

P. 146, l 9. automaton, an image moved by machinery.

15. both the one and the other, both what he was to say and how it was to be said.

P. 147, l 6. deigned, condescended.

10. construction, explanation, interpretation.

P. 148, l 5. queries, questions

l. 13. cared for, despatched, killed. For the euphemism compare *Macbeth*, I v. 68. "He that's coming must be provided for"

16. so inconsiderable a man, a man so much beneath your notice.

P. 149, l 4. foam, indicating frenzy

12. struck at the change, etc., impressed by the transformation his countenance had undergone.

32. impenetrability, insensibility, callousness  
ascendency, superiority.

P. 150, l 12 cozened, cheated.

17. fiat (Latin), let it be done, solemn command.

15 atone for, make amends for.

18. coloured it well, put everything in a plausible light.

23 impenetrable, difficult to see through, baffling.

25. signet-ring, ring with a seal.

33 What thou dost, do quickly. See *John*, xiii. 27.

P. 152, l 2. presence-hall or presence chamber, the room in which guests were received. See plan.

16. personage, part, character.

31. culminated, reached its highest point. The astrological metaphor means that Dudley's predominance at the English court had never been greater.

P. 153, l 5. jarred upon that nerve, produced discord in his heart where it could not be disturbed without excessive pain.

7. great hall, the largest apartment in the castle was 90 feet long and 45 feet broad.

27. Michael Angelo (1475-1564), perhaps the greatest of Italian painters and sculptors.

Chantrey (1781-1847), a great English sculptor famous for his "Sleeping Children" in Lichfield Cathedral and statues and busts of Scott and other famous men.

P 154, l. 15 *once more to, etc*, we must turn again to the consideration of this kill-joy.

26 *hallucinations, delusions*

28 *away with her, take her away.*

30 *She will think.* Irony; what Elizabeth regarded as an absurd delusion that she might possibly cherish, was actually true.

P. 155, l. 5. *Juno-like.* To Juno as the queen of heaven was naturally attributed a stately species of beauty. See *Aeneid*, I. 46.

10 *love best, etc.* So elsewhere Scott speaks of the

“stern joy that warriors feel  
In foemen worthy of their steel.”

11. *give.* Compare p 136, l. 20

12 *he would have wished her dead.* Here again we have irony, for Elizabeth's supposition, though she does not know it, is exactly confirmed by Leicester's conduct.

17. *falsehood* of his reply to Elizabeth.

23. *flourish, fanfare, a strain of music on the trumpet to herald the approach of anyone.*

*kettle-drums, drums made of metal vessels covered with parchment*

P. 156, l. 18. *quadrilles, troops, companies.*

P 157, l. 5 *it did require, it was necessary*

25. *vizard, mask, a covering of cloth or other material to conceal the face.*

26. *masks here by metonymy means 'persons wearing masks.'* Compare ‘blue jacket’ for ‘sailor.’

P. 158, l. 20. *topic, subject.*

P. 159, l. 27. *distemperature, discomposure, agitation.*

28. *equal, all the same to me, I do not care where we have our meeting.*

P. 160, l. 13 *obsequious expresses mean submissiveness and humble behaviour carried to excess.*

24. *by shifting of trenchers, as a waiter by bringing and taking away plates.*

33. *so, provided that.*

P. 161, l. 9. *among our train, by marrying one of the ladies in our suite.*

25. *mutability to the sun.* The sun has not phases like the moon and Venus, but in its apparent motion revolves round the earth like the other heavenly bodies. According to modern astronomy it is only one of many fixed stars.

32. *a circumstance is in apposition to the preceding sentence.*

P. 162, l. 30 **inexorable**, unrelenting

31 **If I rise**, etc., to higher power in the state, *e.g.* by marrying Elizabeth

P. 163, l. 8, **we**. In his pride he employs the plural of the pronoun generally confined in the first person to kings and editors

12 **safely bestowed**, placed in safety

13 **that with which**, Amy In case his letter should fall into other hands, he expresses himself in language that will only be intelligible to Varney

31 **Equerry**, a servant in charge of horses.

32 **assurance**, impudence shown in the curtness of his reply and his resolute tone of voice in addressing a noble lord.

P. 165, l. 4. **so sloven-like**, in such a clumsy manner

24 **more sinned against than sinning**, from *Lear*, III. ii. 60.

P. 166, l. 10. **superb precincts**, splendid grounds

12 **freestone**, sandstone so called because it can be freely cut in any direction.

18 **sheeted**, in their winding-sheets Compare "sheeted dead" in *Hamlet* I. i. 115.

26. **youthful beauty**, a beautiful young woman. By metonymy the abstract is used for the concrete

**of summer night**. The nightingale is by etymology the night singer

30 **now joyous, now pathetic**. Some think the nightingale's song joyous, others think it sad. Keats refers to the nightingale's "happy lot," while Milton calls the bird "most melancholy"

P. 167, l. 1. **far different**. Compare the second stanza of Byron's *Parisina*, published in 1816.

12. **as passing**, while he passed. This uncommon use of 'as' in a temporal sense with a present participle is found in several passages of Scott, *e.g.* *Marmion*, II. xxxiii. 9.

16. **which way**, etc., the drift of his base scheming

P. 168, l. 3. **partisan**, political follower.

9. **other occupations**. Leicester is speaking with bitter irony of what he really considers base pursuits. He is ironical again when he professes to regard Tressilian as "an important and worthy subject of conversation"

P. 169, l. 11. **my respect**, etc., I have so little respect, *i.e.* so much contempt for him that I cannot speak of him in milder terms

19. **at her own free disposal**. She must be allowed complete freedom of action.

**petrified**, turned to stone.

P 170, l 7. **tangle**, be thrilled. See *Jeremiah*, xix 3.

frontless, without shame

9 **but yet**— The dash indicates that the sentence is left unfinished.\*

28 **rencontre** (French), meeting.

33 **antagonist**, opponent.

P. 171, l 2 **jackanape**, impudent boy compared contemptuously to an ape. The word is generally spelled 'jackanapes,' being perhaps originally 'jack o' apes,' a keeper of apes. 'Jack' is used contemptuously for a man as in 'Jack of all trades'

**tilting**, fencing. The word is generally used of fighting with lances on horseback

P 172, l 13 **Hocktide**, a word of uncertain etymology, was a holiday celebrated on the second Monday and Tuesday after Easter Sunday. Ethelred ordered the massacre of the Danes in 1002 and not 1012.

16 **preconceived idea**, notion formed beforehand

17. **whose ... whose** See note on p 126, l 31, and p. 207, l 28

22 **political wish**, wish based on political expediency. Elizabeth thought that her interest in sports would make her a popular sovereign

P 173, l 2. **those pageants**, such as the historical plays of Shakespeare. See p. 75. The contrast, however, is not distinct, as the Coventry play was also based on a historical incident, although treated in a burlesque manner with captains mounted on hobby-horses

12 **light of her countenance** : a Biblical expression. See *Proverbs* xvi 15

17 **according to appointment**, as had been arranged.

31 **sequestered**, secluded.

P 174, l 9 **derogation**, dishonour.

P. 176, l 5 **thou** is unusual in addressing a superior. It may here be regarded as expressing supreme contempt or rather as elevation of language naturally employed in speaking of imminent death.

P. 177, l 2 **goblin-like**, weird, supernatural

3. **secured**, fastened.

24. **Dickon**, nicknamed Flibbertigibbet, the boy who had shown Tressilian the way to Wayland's smithy.

P. 178, l 6 **asylum**, place of refuge.

20. **I have been made to believe**. See note on p. 143, l 14

P. 179, l 20 **belted earl**. At the ceremony of their investiture Earls, like knights, were girt with a sword of honour.

P. 180, l 32. **interim**, meantime.



P. 181, l. 12. **menials**, a contemptuous term for servants.

P. 183, l. 7. **serve the turn**, answer the purpose, content them, as in *Merry Wives*, V. v. 108.

P. 184, l. 4. **Effigies** (Latin), image The usual English form is 'effigy.'

6. **baton** (French), staff of office.

7. **the Earl's sword**. The sense shows that Leicester is meant, not the Earl Marshal, although he was last mentioned The unbuckled sword indicated that he was under restraint as a prisoner.

11. **Henry himself**, her father Henry VIII.

22. ~~Dan~~ **Amy Dudley** because her husband will be punished by the loss of his earldom and perhaps even by being executed as a traitor.

P. 185, l. 14. **oriel window**, a window projecting so as to form a small apartment.

29. '**Sdeath**, a corruption of 'God's death'

P. 186, l. 1. **a sad conviction**, a firm belief that will make him sad, because any Englishman would be distressed to think that his great Queen was not free from the frailty of ordinary human nature.

6. **from aught**— The question is left unfinished.

15. **mortification**, humiliation.

24. **discharge you**, relieve you of the custody of your prisoner.

P. 187, l. 25. **piecemeal**, bit by bit.

P. 188, l. 4. **gall and wormwood**, excessively bitter. Gall is bile and wormwood is a bitter plant.

14. **turns to bay**, turns and faces the baying, i.e. barking hounds.

31. **effrontery**, impudence.

P. 189, l. 3. **patriarchal**. Several of the Patriarchs had more than one wife, e.g. Lamech (*Gen.* iv. 19).

4. **left hand**. See p. 101, l. 7.

P. 190, l. 2. **a certain bosom**, the man in Aesop's fable who warmed a frozen snake in his bosom and was stung to death when it revived

6. **thaws our ruff**, takes the stiffness out of my ruff. The idea is that the starch would be softened by Leicester's breath. The ruff was the large frilled collar that was worn in Tudor times.

14. **who hath been sworn of our chamber**, who has taken his oaths as a member of our Privy Council.

17. **in commission with**, united with you in this office.

29. **stout**, strong and bold.

P. 191, l. 21. **apprized**, informed.

P. 192, l 6. without his shoes, in his bed.

7. verified, confirmed.

22 interim, interval of time, namely the interval between the granting of the permission and starting from Kenilworth.

P. 193, l 3. ministry, service.

10 horse-litter, a bed, like a hammock, carried by two horses.

16 such, excuse or apology

25 dark lantern, lantern with light concealed.

28 Ave, etc, hail Mary—Pray for us. This is a prayer to the Virgin Mary, a relic of earlier days when he was a Roman Catholic. 'Deliver us from evil' from the English version of the Lord's Prayer was more suitable for him now that he was a Protestant and a Puritan.

32. more need of prayer because Varney is going to make him take part in murder.

P. 194, l. 7. Is Janet safe? Like Shylock, Foster is not without family affection. See *Merchant of Venice*, II. viii. 15.

17. "Wives obey your husbands." Not an exact quotation. See *Ephesians*, v. 22

P 195, l 4. the warrant, that which gives you the authority, the signet-ring

13 put me to it, make it necessary for me to resort to force.

P. 196, l. 6. made her toilette, dressed herself.

P. 197, l 27 thy idleness and debauched folly, you, idle and dissolute fool, will soon be hanged. Abstract for concrete as in p. 166, l. 26.

30. objurgation, abuse.

P. 198, l 3. wore spurs. Knights were distinguished by the gilded spurs they were privileged to wear. Therefore Eustace in *Marmion*, VI. xxv. 9, seeing no prospect of winning knighthood, exclaims, "No hope of gilded spurs to-day"

9. tamper with, try to corrupt Lambourne, influence him to do evil.

14 ignorant here takes as an object the noun clause that follows.

15. the litter-load, the contents of the litter. Criminals often shrink from bluntly naming their acts and victims. Lady Macbeth, instead of naming Duncan, speaks of him as "he that's coming." *Macbeth*, I. v. 67.

17. so forth, whatever other titles you may bear.

29. peremptorily, without fail

32 you were as wise, it would be wisdom on your part.

P. 199, l. 17. Michael not me, do not address me as Michael. Compare "uncle me no uncles." *Richard II.* II. iii. 85.

20 my indenture is out, the time specified in my indenture is expired and I am no longer an apprentice. The indenture was a document containing the time of service and other conditions of the apprenticeship

set up for myself, start business on my own account.

22 quittance, discharge. Varney keeps up the metaphor started by Lambourne.

P 200, l 25. implied condition. See p. 196, l 20.

28 relays, supplies of fresh horses

P. 201, l 4. sleep sound and long, i.e. the sleep of death.

8 ~~truth~~ itself, absolutely trusty.

16 marry in oaths is a corruption of Mary.

21. hind, peasant

22 will never ask after the rich furniture. Varney knows that after Amy's death Leicester will shrink with horror from everything that reminds him of the tragedy.

30 'scaping, running away

31. an, if. is a different spelling of 'and'. This clause, like 'under favour' in Foster's next speech, is apologetic and under the circumstances rather ironical

P 202, l 4 gewgaw, gaudy, expresses a Puritan's contempt for the showy ornamentation of the rooms that had been decorated for Amy

14 what Foster shall I be, what epithet will you apply to my name. He expects that on the morrow Amy will perhaps call him 'villanous Foster'

18. you shall be, I will speak of you as

P. 203, l. 2. homely in its accommodations, plainly furnished

13 winking to signify that he was communicating something mysterious.

17. drawbridge. This gallery differed from a drawbridge inasmuch as it cut off communication by being let down, whereas a drawbridge does so by being drawn up. In this respect it rather resembled a trapdoor.

19. the landing-place, the level place at the top of the stair-case.

21. wrought, worked, set in motion

P. 204, l. 6. gimcrack, a term applied to a trivial mechanical device.

9. marry. See note on p. 201, l. 16

15. what is here used adverbially in the sense of 'how.' honest, here merely expresses familiarity.

19. feigned, in order to get them out of the way lest they should interfere with the projected murder or afterwards give evidence against the murderers

32 in vain, etc. See *Proverbs*, i. 17.

P. 205, l 3. the falling trap, the part of the floor of the gallery which was lowered by the machinery when communication between the top of the stair and the bed-room had to be cut off

4 slight adhesion, the friction between the edge of the trapdoor and the stationary portion of the gallery

28. thy reward, Cumnor Place which he hoped to get as a freehold property.

P. 206, l 1. incarnate, embodied in flesh

9. seething of the kid. See *Exodus*, xxiii. 19.

P. 207, l 7. make a holiday. Attending an execution was a favourite amusement in England even as late as the 18th century, when Dr Johnson went with a company to see a man hanged For the phrase see *Childe Harold IV* cxi., where the dying gladiator is "Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday"

11. heroes of antiquity, e.g. Hannibal.

28 which ... which. The relative clause dependent on another relative clause makes a slipshod sentence.

P. 208, l 1. spring-lock, a lock closing automatically by means of a spring

9. period, end.

20 another person. See author's introduction

31 Virginia expedition. Raleigh's first expedition to Virginia was in 1584.

## QUESTIONS ON KENILWORTH.

What light does *Kenilworth* throw on Scott's tastes and sentiments ?  
Estimate the amount of historical knowledge that may be derived from the novel

Compare *Kenilworth* with any of Shakespeare's great tragedies.

What redeeming traits may be found in the characters of Leicester, Varney, Lambourne and Foster ?

Draw a contrast between Leicester and Sussex.

Why do critics regard Blount and Raleigh as supernumeraries ?

On what occasions and by what means could the tragic catastrophe of *Kenilworth* have been averted ?

Describe Kenilworth Castle and Cumnor Place.

Give an account of the revels at Kenilworth.

Show how Varney induced Leicester to do as he wished.

Scott is said to be especially successful in his portraiture of kings and queens. Illustrate this from his treatment of Elizabeth's character.

What are the principal transgressions of historical fact in *Kenilworth* and why are they committed ?

Make a plan of Kenilworth Castle and a map showing the relative positions of London, Cumnor, Oxford and Ludcote Hall and the distance between those places.

What references are there to religious and political dissensions in *Kenilworth* ?

Can it be truly said that the Age of Chivalry was gone in the reign of Elizabeth ?

Why does Tennyson describe the times of Elizabeth as spacious ?

Give an account of Amy Robsart's visit to Kenilworth.

How do the conversations in *Kenilworth* differ from the conversational language of to-day ?

How was it that Lambourne and Tressilian visited Cumnor Place ?  
What reception did they get from Foster ?

What motives determined the conduct of Leicester and Varney on various occasions ?

How did Raleigh win the favour of the Queen ?

Describe the favourite amusements of the court and people in Tudor times.

How does Scott introduce into *Kenilworth* references to men of letters and their works ?

How does *Kenilworth* illustrate the fact that

“ We worldly men  
Have miserable mad mistaking eyes ” ?

